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EDITED BY
GEORGE LAURENCE GOMME, F.S.A.

POPULAR SUPERSTITIONS.

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INTRODUCTION.

THIS volume to some extent forms a second volume to that on *Manners and Customs*. I have had to refer on several occasions in the following pages to the papers printed there, and it has been oftentimes difficult to determine the best arrangement for the undigested mass of material which the correspondents of the old *Gentleman's Magazine* so constantly forwarded. That this material is valuable there cannot, I think, be a doubt; and I trust that the arrangement of it in these volumes of collections may be found adequately to preserve it in the most accessible form for the use of students. I must express my deep gratitude to the many kind correspondents who have forwarded me suggestions and corrections, and have helped me in many ways; and particularly I have to thank Mr. R. H. Luard for a list of errata which he has discovered in the two preceding volumes of the series. This list will be printed, and I shall be most happy to receive any assistance of this sort, so that the books may become of that permanent value which I claim for them, and seek to make them.

The contents of the present volume are devoted to Popular Superstitions. As Secretary to the Folklore Society since its commencement in 1878, and as a student of Folklore for some time previously to this date, I have naturally been in a position to form some judgment as to the force of traditional superstition upon the minds of those who live on the outskirts of our civilization. But the full extent and nature of this force is only properly to be understood when, in getting together such a collection of instances as the *Gentleman's Magazine* affords, one comes upon the actual living

superstition over and over again. No scientists have had a hand in this work. It is straight from the people themselves, and breathes their hopes and fears. It is a remarkable thing that, as I have pointed out on p. 319, in the year 1884 genuine cases of witchcraft should still exist, and that in 1830 a writer in the *Gentleman's Magazine* should state that a case of ill-treating a woman for witchcraft in 1827 would probably be the last which the historian would have to record (see p. 250); and this unusually strong persistence of superstitious fancies and beliefs is a scientific fact of great importance to the student of man's mental and social development. The force at the back of this superstition in modern times is *traditional reverence* for what has been handed down. A man who has once cast behind him all this kind of thing never resumes it; nay, he does more! he eradicates it not only from his own mind, but from the minds of his children. He breaks the thread of traditional sanction, in point of fact, and the whole fabric gives way before the march of intellect. But when superstition has died out gradually, from inanition and non-use rather than from a definite uprooting, times will come when the mother in her trouble or the cottager in some sudden emergency thinks of certain long-forgotten practices which their fathers had told them of, and had used before their eyes, and then we get a revival of traditional superstitions. But the following pages do not approach this state of things very nearly or very frequently. The bulk of them are occupied by records of a much more archaic life. They tell us for the most part, not of the fading away of superstitious practices and beliefs, but of the strong vitality of them; not of the intermittent and fitful use of or faith in them, but of the constant and every-day application of them to the necessities of the occasion. And above all things they are not enshrined in the pages which have preserved them by the scientific inquirer, by the man who docketed and arranges and compares and sifts and rejects; but by the curious antiquary of the last century, who treasured old things because they were old, and for nothing else, who sought to deduce no new ideas, no new conclusions from the objects he revered; or else by the local observer of men and things who half-believed in what he related, and often in rejecting or accounting for the superstition in others betrayed his own belief in certain portions. Thus the very literary forms of these relics of the past are instructive lessons to

the Folklorist of to-day. In most cases I have preserved, according to the plan of these volumes of collections, the forms intact; but in one or two instances, notably the few contributions of later date, I have eliminated all but the actual contributions of fact, and left the learned disquisitions to be read in the original by those who desire to do so. Again, in the witchcraft section, I have shortened somewhat the lengthy narratives, though in no case have I left out any passages of substantial information.

The first section is devoted to the Superstitious Customs which have become attached to certain Days and Seasons. This is not the place to discuss how far Church ritual has absorbed popular customs, as advocated in that remarkable letter from Pope Gregory to St. Augustine, which suggests a meeting half-way of pagan rites and ceremonies in the propagation of Christianity. The Laws of the Saxon Kings, quoted on p. 319, certainly indicate that the people of those days had remained very much paganized, in spite of the teaching of the Church; and when we of this age come to compare Church custom and Folklore, we cannot help observing that it is oftentimes difficult to define where the one begins and the other leaves off. (See *Antiquary*, May, 1881, vol. iii., pp. 193-195.) Looking at what the *Gentleman's Magazine* has preserved of festival customs, there can be no doubt that a great deal of older life is enshrined in these Christian observances, and it will form a nucleus for the consideration of the Folklore of the calendar, which has yet to be done by competent hands, though it is to be hoped that Mr. J. T. Micklethwaite and Mr. Vaux will grapple with this subject in their long-projected volume on Church Folklore. The contributions arranged under this section have been used, though not anything like so exhaustively as would be supposed, by Sir Henry Ellis in his edition of Brand's *Popular Antiquities*, and by other writers on these subjects. Readers who wish to follow up the matter more fully than the notes appended to this volume will allow them, should consult, besides the general books on popular superstitions, J. Brady's *Clavis Calendaria*, 1812, 2 vols., 8vo; R. T. Hampson's *Medii Ævi Kalendarium*, 1841, 2 vols., 8vo.; Rev. T. F. Thiselton Dyer's *British Popular Customs arranged according to the calendar of the year*, 1876, 8vo.; R. Chambers's *Book of Days*, 1863, 2 vols.; W. Hone's *Every Day Book and Year Book*, 1837-46, 4 vols.; and Mr.

R. C. Hope's very valuable edition of Barnabe Googe's *Popish Kingdome*. It is well also to consult the *Almanach des Traditions Populaires*, published in 1882, 1883 and 1884 by M. Rolland, the eminent French Folklorist. Turning to some of the details of this section, I would observe that the ancient ceremony on Candlemas Day (p. 20), of the Judges dancing round the coal fire, is exceedingly curious and very little known, because Brand does not record it except incidentally under Midsummer Day, and Sir Henry Ellis does not seem to have noted these records of the custom preserved in the *Gentleman's Magazine*. Whirlin Sunday is a new addition to calendar Folklore, and probably entirely local. St. Winnal's Day, though recorded in the calendar as that devoted to a saint, "S. Guénolé, abbé, rend les femmes et la terre propres à porter fruit," has no place in calendar Folklore according to English authorities, and the Norfolk observances and rhyme recorded on p. 31 may be looked upon as another gain to this branch of popular superstitions. The same may also be said of the Scottish Windy Saturday, recorded on pp. 34—35. The wide-spread popularity of the mumming plays and similar pageants in olden times, makes examples of these curious adaptations of popular legends very useful as a comparative study, and the Cornish example given on p. 79 will hence be acceptable.

The next section is devoted to Superstitious Customs and Beliefs of various descriptions. They fall into a rough classification of collections of local superstitions, well superstitions, divining-rods, Folk-medicine, superstitions connected with birds and animals, etc. Lincolnshire, Kent, Suffolk, and Worcestershire have contributions specially devoted to their localities; and as the first three of these counties have not as yet placed their Folklore on record among the many books that are now being produced, although among the volumes now being done for the Folklore Society is the *Folklore of Lincolnshire*, by Mr. Edward Peacock, these contributions will doubtless form an acceptable nucleus when anything in this direction is contemplated. In *Archæologia Cantiana* are some papers on Kentish Folklore; and the *Suffolk Garland, or East County Minstrel*, 1818 (Ipswich), should be consulted. For Worcestershire we have Mr. Jabez Allies' *Antiquities and Folklore of Worcestershire*, which reached a second edition in 1856. The subject of well and water superstitions wants thorough

examination, and with it may be connected the superstitions of sailors, some notes upon which are mentioned in the pages on Lincolnshire and Kentish superstitions (see pp. 118, 120). The first of these is being taken up by Mr. Robert Charles Hope, F.S.A., who promises a volume on it; and the second is engaging the attention of the celebrated French Folklorist, M. Sébillot. On Folk-medicine we have the invaluable monograph of Mr. William George Black, *Folk-Medicine*, published for the Folklore Society in 1883; and I think the *Ancient Book of Medical Recipes* (see pp. 154-164), containing "the fiftie booke [of] certayne medicines which were taken out of the vicar of Warlingham's booke, beinge, as he sayde, *taught him by the fayries*," will be an acceptable addition to this study. I cannot, unfortunately, find out who the Edward Potter was who compiled this curious MS., and the correspondent of the *Gentleman's Magazine* unfortunately gives only one of the recipes derived from the "fayries." Mr. Black has a chapter of his book devoted to "Our Lord and the Saints in Folk-Medicine," but he does not mention the rhyming formulæ, given on p. 155, among those he records. This and other things prove the MS. to be a curious one, and it is to be hoped that it may be more thoroughly examined, and all that is really valuable printed. The King's Evil is a subject that appears to want its historian, for it is astonishing that such acts of folly and ignorance could have been encouraged by the highest in the land, unless used as one of the engines of government. The murderer's charm (p. 205) is curious as a record of an actual occurrence, and as an example of the innate tendency to superstition in men whose minds are of a low order. But the whole record of vulgar errors and popular superstitions is of much the same character. That all Folklore is not archaic in the sense of having once belonged to primitive people there is ample proof in some examples of purely modern superstition. These are for the most part mere fancies obtained from an exaggerated idea of modern facts and thoughts. Take, for instance, the prevalent idea of thirteen at table. The *St. James's Gazette* a few weeks ago gave the following account of this superstition in New York:—"The members of the New York 'Thirteen Club' held their annual dinner-party at Glen Island a few days ago. They formed three or four parties of thirteen each, and each party had its own separate table, one of the objects of the club—hence its name—being to discountenance the vulgar prejudice

against dinner-parties of thirteen, and similar superstitions. Close to the door of the restaurant a ladder was placed leaning against the roof of the building, and each guest deliberately walked under it as he entered. Thirteen saltcellars were placed on each table, and each of the diners solemnly spilled a portion of the salt after he had taken his place at the table. The bill of fare was printed on thick white paper, shaped like a tombstone, with a death's-head grinning at the top. 'Boston baked beans' were served up in coffin-shaped tins, and the wine was iced in celluloid vessels made to resemble skulls."

The third section, on Witchcraft, speaks for itself, and is arranged to give the general history first, and then examples arranged in counties. Some of these contributions I have shortened, and some merely summarized; but the whole section remains as nearly intact as is necessary. To the more general works on witchcraft quoted frequently in the text of this section, such as Scot's *Witchcraft*, Glanville's *Witchcraft*, and King James' *Demonologie*, may be added as references to this subject Thomas Wright's *Narratives of Sorcery and Magic*, 1851, 2 vols., and the same author's volume, edited for the Camden Society, *Narrative of Proceedings against Dame Alice Kyteler, Prosecuted for Sorcery in 1324: 1843*. Some of the tracts mentioned in the papers "On the Rise and Progress of Witchcraft" (p. 223) are duly recorded by Mr. Hazlitt in his two volumes, invaluable to the bibliographer, of *Collections and Notes*, and these I have duly noted; but those that are not so noted are additions to the already long list of printed tracts which exist upon this subject. One of these tracts, *News from Scotland* (see pp. 233, 295), is exceedingly scarce, and Mr. Hazlitt, in his *Collections and Notes*, did not succeed in getting a full title. It was printed in 1591, and the occurrences related therein were, in all probability, the immediate cause of James I. passing the Witch Act. This rare tract, not to be found even in the British Museum, was printed in full in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1779, and was edited for the Roxburgh Club in 1816. It affords one of the most amusing records of incredulity that one can possibly imagine. Still, it goes with other records of the same class to show that witchcraft was a power among men much more formidable than is generally supposed; and it may be worth the reader's attention to pursue this subject in Mr. Keary's *Origin of Primitive Belief*, where witchcraft is classified among the

religious cults of the world, and receives much new light by the aid of the scientific study of popular superstition.

This brings us to the end of the section making up this volume, but it does not exhaust all that the *Gentleman's Magazine* has to say upon the subject of popular superstitions and its kindred subjects. There are still four sections unprinted which I had hoped to have included in the present volume ; but the materials to be garnered from this delightful old magazine are much richer than I had bargained for. These unprinted sections relate to "Fairy Beliefs," "Legends and Traditions," "Prophecies, Dreams, and Ghost Stories," and "Customs and Superstitions of Foreign Countries," and they will be published subsequently in another volume.

The papers which I have not deemed worth reprinting are, first, those relating to the supposed existence of mermaids, but which were really, as was subsequently proved, only hoaxes of the most stupid kind. These are :

"Curious account of a Mermaid," 1755, p. 504.

"Syren," 1759, p. 560.

"Mermaid in Scotland," 1809 (part ii.), pp. 829, 1016, 1190.

"The Mermaid Defended," 1822, part ii., pp. 515, 516; 1823, part i., pp. 34-39.

Other omissions are :

"Custom of Adorning Churches with Evergreens," 1765, p. 596.

"Police-Court Account of Conjuraton," 1754, p. 290.

The contributors to this volume are mostly different from those already noted in the volumes on "Manners and Customs" and "Dialects." Dr. Pegge, under his signature "T. Rowe," is again a constant contributor ; and M. Green, William Hamper, George Oliver, Lewis Morris, and D. A. Briton are also names referred to in the preceding volumes. We have in the present volume many names of living men. Notably Mr. William J. Thoms, the founder of *Notes and Queries*, the inventor of the word "Folklore," and the genial antiquary and good kind friend to whom I am indebted for so much that is bright and cheering, and whose memory will always live fresh in my mind. Mr. John Noake is the author of many books on Worcestershire, among which may be mentioned *Worcester in Olden Times*, 1849 ;

Rambles in Worcestershire, 1854; *Notes and Queries for Worcestershire*, 1856; *Worcester Sects*, 1861; *Monastery and Cathedral of Worcester*, 1866; *Guide to Worcestershire*, 1868; *Worcestershire Relics*, 1877. Then there are "Cuthbert Bede," Mr. Hugh Pigot, Mr. W. M. Brookes, and Mr. J. T. Fowler. Of those who have passed away, the greatest name is that of Thomas Wright, one of the most voluminous writers on antiquarian subjects of this age, and whose works are better known than generally falls to the lot of those who busy themselves with matters archæological. Josiah Beckwith was the well-known editor of Blount's *Jocular Customs*. He was born at Rothwell, near Leeds, in 1734, and practised as a solicitor at Rotherham. W. Bingley was no doubt the author of that name who passed his B.A. in 1795 and M.A. in 1803, and wrote *Tour through North Wales*, 1798, 2 vols., *Animal Biography*, 1802, 3 vols., *Biographical Dictionary of Musical Composers*, 1813, 2 vols. He died in Charlotte Street, Bloomsbury, in 1823. S. Shaw, Junior, may be identified with the Rev. Stebbing Shaw, born at Stone, in Staffordshire, in 1762, and succeeded his father as rector of Hartshorne, Derbyshire, in 1799. He wrote a *History of Staffordshire* in 1798. W. Bickerstaffe was born at Leicester in 1728, and became master of the Grammar School there, took holy orders in 1770, and died 1789. He was a great friend of Mr. Nichols, and contributed largely to the *Gentleman's Magazine*, as well as some papers to Nichols' *History of Leicestershire*. John Sherwen, M.D., besides two medical works published in 1782 and 1799 respectively, took a great interest in the Chatterton controversy, and published at Bath in 1809 a work examining the question of *the Antiquity of MS. supposed to be written by Thomas Rowley*. The British Museum possesses the following books, all containing MS. notes by Dr. Sherwen: *Poems of Thomas Rowley*, 1777, and 1782; Bryant's *Observations on the Poems of Thomas Rowley*, 1781; Davis' *Life of Thomas Chatterton*, 1806. Then we have W. Chamberlaine, J. Stevenson, S. Pollett, W. Hersee, W. Dyke, W. Horton Lloyd, R. R. Rawlins, H. Snezoe, George Bayley, S. Manning, Charles Jackson, and John R. Lucas.

G. L. GOMME.

2, PARK VILLAS,
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BARNES, S.W.



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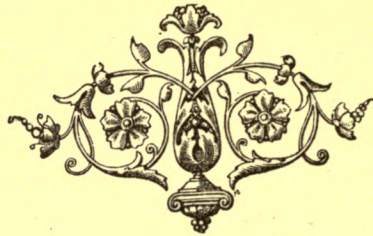
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Days and Seasons.





DAYS AND SEASONS.

General Notes on Festivals.

[1790, p. 719.]

I HAVE been much entertained with the customs and manners of certain towns and villages in England, etc., mentioned in some of your former Magazines, and should be glad if some of your correspondents would inform us why most places in England have eggs and collops (slices of bacon) on Shrove Monday, pancakes on Tuesday, and fritters on the Wednesday, in the same week, for dinner. Having occasion some few years ago to go to Harrowgate for the benefit of my health, I resided great part of my time at that pleasant market town, Ripon, where I was witness to some very curious customs. To begin with the year: the Sunday before Candlemas-day at the collegiate church, a fine antient building, is one continued blaze of light all the afternoon by an immense number of candles. On Easter Sunday, as soon as the service of the church is over, the boys run about the streets, and lay hold of every woman or girl they can, and take their buckles from their shoes. This farce is continued till the next day at noon, when the females begin, and return the compliment upon the men, which does not end till Tuesday evening; nay, I was told that, some years ago, no traveller could pass through the town without being stopped and having his spurs taken away, unless redeemed by a little money, which is the only way to have your buckles returned. Some time in the spring, I think the day before Holy Thursday, all the clergy, attended by the singing men and boys of the choir, perambulate the town in their canonicals, singing hymns; and the blue-coat charity-boys follow, singing, with green boughs in their hands; the meaning of which I never could learn. On the eve of All Saints the good women make a cake for every one in the family; so this is generally called "cake night." And on Christmas-eve the grocers send each of their customers a pound, or half a pound, of currants and raisins, to make a Christmas pudding. The chandlers also send large mold

candles, and the coopers logs of wood, generally called yule-clogs, which are always used on Christmas-eve; but, should it be so large as not to be all burnt that night, which is frequently the case, the remains are kept till Old Christmas-eve. And, on Christmas-day, the singing-boys come into the church with large baskets full of red apples, with a sprig of rosemary stuck in each, which they present to all the congregation, and generally have a return made them of 2d. 4d. or 6d., according to the quality of the lady or gentleman. In some parts of England they heave one another on Easter Monday, that is, take them up in their arms, as if they wish to know how heavy they were. I had almost forgot to inform you, that at Ripon, at nine o'clock every evening, a man blows a large horn at the market-cross, and then at the mayor's door. If any of your ingenious correspondents can inform us of the meaning or origin of these curious customs, it will oblige a constant reader, though a new correspondent.

P.S. The word "creepers," which has been such a puzzle to many of your readers, is nothing but the moveable irons in a kitchen-grate, which keeps the fire together, and called "creepers" in most parts of England, and sometimes "keepers."

Yours, etc., RIPONIENSIS.

[1790, *Part II.*, pp. 795, 796.]

Your correspondent Riponiensis, p. 719, will find a solution of some of his queries in Bourne's "Antiquities of the Common People," edit. Brand, p. 155, for the *large mold candles* on Christmas Eve: "Our forefathers used, when the common devotions of the *eve* were over, and night came on, to light up candles of an *uncommon size*, which were called *Christmas candles*, and to lay a log of wood on the fire, which they termed a *yule dog*. This custom, Bede tells us, was observed by the Saxons before their conversion to Christianity." Mr. Brand found in the "Ephemeris sive Diarium Historicum," Francf. 1590, 4to., that sweetmeats were at this time given to the fathers in the Vatican, and all kinds of little images were found in the confectioners' shops. He mentions a *yule dough*, or image of a child in paste, given by bakers to their customers; and from these circumstances he derives *mince pies*. In Franconia boys and girls go about singing carols, and get fruit and money (*Ib.*). The candles are usually lighted and carried about on Candlemas Day, and not on the Sunday preceding it. Durand tells us that on Easter Tuesday wives beat their husbands, and on the following day husbands beat their wives (*Ib.*, p. 254). It seems by Mr. Bourne (*Ib.*, p. 250) that the liberties of the Saturnalia were transferred to Easter in compliment to the joyful occasion. The boys and girls at Ripon observe some practice like this. The custom of *heaving* may be substituted to *dancing*,

or be merely an Easter frolick, or gambol; or it may be a remain of the *Lupercalia* celebrated in February. Bourne, p. 213, says: "In some country parishes it is the custom on *one of the three days before* Holy Thursday to go round the bounds and limits of the parish;" and he derives it from the antient *Terminalia*, a festival for the same purpose. It was fixed to *Rogation week*; and *Rogations* or Litanies, made on a particular occasion by Mamerus, Bishop of Vienna A.D. 550; and the subject of these Litanies was to beg a blessing on the fruits of the earth. In Franconia, as in England, *willow wands* made part of the parade (*Ib.*, p. 269, ex Boëmo Aubano). All Saints' Eve *cake* is nowhere explained; but a different custom of sporting with apples and nuts, and kindling fires, is in Mr. Brand's Appendix, pp. 343-345. *Shrove Monday* is called *Collop Monday*, because they then took leave of flesh, both *fresh* and *salted*; and with this *Egg Saturday* at Oxford corresponds. Pancakes and fritters, or similar food, became the food for the next succeeding fast (Brand, pp. 331-333). The same ingenious writer says: "Some ascribe the *Fairy ring*, inquired after by your correspondent J. M., p. 719, to *lightning*, or *ants* (*Ib.*, pp. 117, 118).

D. H.

[1783, Part II., pp. 577, 578.]

"Tout ce que la religion a de plus auguste étoit défiguré dans presque tout l'occident par les coutumes les plus ridicules."—Voltaire, "Essai sur les Mœurs et l'Esprit des Nations," chap. xlv.

As amongst your readers and correspondents there are many who take pleasure in whatever relates to ancient usages, and in tracing their origin, I have thought my intention could not be so well answered by any other means as by procuring a place for what follows in your entertaining and instructive magazine. I have often wished to know the first foundation of several popular customs, appropriated to particular seasons, and been led to think, however widely they may have deviated from their original design and meaning, of which we have now wholly lost sight, they are derived from some religious tenets, observances, or ceremonies. I am convinced that this is the case in Catholic countries, where such like popular usages, as well as religious ceremonies, are more frequent than amongst us; though there can be little doubt but that the customs I refer to, and which we retain, took their rise whilst these kingdoms were wholly Catholic, immersed in ignorance and superstition, and in everything led and dictated by the priests and religious communities.

To give an instance which will illustrate or better explain my meaning. The inhabitants of Paris on Thursday in Passion Week go regularly to the Bois de Boulogne, and parade there regularly with their equipages. There used to be the Penitential Psalms, or Tenebres, sung in a chapel in the wood on that day, by the most excellent voices, which drew together great numbers of the best company from Paris,

who still continue to resort thither, though no longer for the purposes of religion and mortification, but (if one may judge from appearances) of ostentation and pride. A similar cavalcade I have also seen, on a like occasion, at Naples, the religious origin of which will probably soon cease to be remembered.

In the idea that many customs retained amongst us spring from some institutions which have a reference to religion, I have endeavoured to recollect and add such as have fallen within my observation (some of which may probably be local), joining to each a vague, hasty conjecture as to the possible foundation of them; not pretending to assign these as the real reasons, but hoping to draw information, not censure, from some of your readers, who are possessed of more knowledge and will bestow more thought on the subject.

In the midst of that festivity and hospitality, and those marks of general joy which prevail at the anniversary of the birth of Christ, it is a very common custom to ornament the houses (and many churches) with evergreens; and minced pyes are a constant dish. May we refer the branches (as well as the palms on Palm Sunday) to this: "And they cut down branches and strewed them in the way;" and may not the pye, a compound of the choicest productions of the East, have in view the offerings made by the wise men, who came from afar to worship, bringing spices, etc.?

Some things customary probably refer simply to the idea of feasting or mortification, according to the season and occasion. Of these perhaps are lamb's-wool on Christmas Eve [see *post*, p. 16]; furmety on Mothering Sunday; braggot (which is a mixture of ale, sugar, and spices) at the festival of Easter; and cross-buns, saffron cakes, or symnells, in Passion Week; though these, being formerly, at least, unleavened, may have a retrospect to the unleavened bread of the Jews, in the same manner as lamb at Easter to the Paschal Lamb. This, perhaps, may also be the case with respect to pancakes on Shrove Tuesday; unless that shall be supposed to allude to "the egg at Easter," an emblem of the rising up out of the grave; in the same manner as the chick, entombed, as it were, in the egg, is in due time brought to life. So also the flowers, with which many churches are ornamented at Easter Day, are most probably intended as emblems of the Resurrection, having just risen again from the earth, in which, during the severity of winter, they seem to have been buried. The barbarous practice of throwing at a cock, tied to a stake, at Shrovetide, I think I have read, has an allusion to the indignities offered by the Jews to the Saviour of the world before his crucifixion; as, perhaps, the custom of imposing upon and ridiculing people on the first of April may have to their mockery of Him. Something like this which we call making April fools is practised also abroad in Catholic countries on Innocents' Day, on which occasion people run through all the rooms, making a pretended search in and under the beds, in memory,

I believe, of the search made by Herod for the recovery and destruction of the child Jesus, and his having been imposed upon and deceived by the wise men, who, contrary to his orders and expectation, "returned into their own country another way."

A custom, which ought to be abolished as improper and indecent, prevails in many places, of *lifting*, as it is called, on Easter Monday and Tuesday. Is this a memorial of Christ being raised up from the grave? There is at least some appearance of it, as there seems to be a trace of the descent of the Holy Ghost on the heads of the Apostles in what passes at Whitsuntide fair in some parts of Lancashire, where one person holds a stick over the head of another, while a third, unperceived, strikes the stick, and thus gives a smart blow to the first. But this, probably, is only local.

There are many other customs, no doubt, which I forget, or have omitted, which your readers would, I am persuaded, be pleased to see knowingly discussed and rationally accounted for, and others which do not seem to admit of a probable explanation. I recollect one more, which, however, I think scarcely needs explaining, viz., that prevailing amongst the Roman Catholics of lighting fires upon the hills on All Saints' Night, the eve of All Souls, fire being, even amongst the Pagans, an emblem of immortality, and well calculated to typify the ascent of the soul to heaven.

H. T.

[1762, *Part I.*, pp. 567, 568.]

The meaning of the Twentieth Day; wherein the proverbial Saying that "Christmas day is one of the twenty, and not one of the twelve," is noticed and explained; and a word is said of Low-Sunday, and Plough-Monday. [See *post*, page 16.]

In ancient time, before the Reformation, our greater festivals here in England (as I presume the case is now in Popish countries) had each of them their Octave, or Eighth Day. Of these Octaves or Uta's, as they are often called, mention is frequently made in the law-books and glossaries, and though the word occurs not in our liturgy, yet we have certain vestiges of the thing amongst us, as in Low Sunday (which is the octave of Easter-day, and is so called in reference to it, that being the high or principal day of the feast, and this the lower or secondary one) and the proper prefaces in the Communion Office, which are directed to be used on the festival, and seven days after.* See Mr. Wheatley on those two places, as likewise Bishop Sparrow.†

* The preface for Whitsunday is to be used only six days after; but that is because the seventh day, or the octave, is absorbed in the great festival of Trinity-Sunday.

† You will find the first Sunday after Easter called Low-Sunday, not only by these authors, but also by Dr. Mareschal, in his *Observations on the Saxon Gospels*, p. 535, and in the common almanacks. In country parishes, where weekly communions are in a manner left off, there is still, in many places, a celebration of it on Low-Sunday, the octave of Easter-Day. [See note 1.]

The former of these authors again, on the Sunday after Christmas-Day, when the same collect is used, writes thus: "It was a custom among the primitive Christians, to observe the octave, or eighth day, after their principal feasts, with great solemnity; and upon every day between the feast and the octave, as also upon the octave itself, they used to repeat some part of that service, which was performed upon the feast itself." See also Bishop Sparrow, p. 113, from whom it appears, that formerly the same collect was used on Low-Sunday as on Easter-Day; and though it has now a distinct collect, yet this relates as expressly to the Resurrection as that on Easter-Sunday does.

If you will turn into the calendars prefixed to the Roman Missals and Breviaries, you will find many of the *Festa Duplicia*, or Higher Feasts, dignified with Octaves; see also Dr. Mareschal's Observations on the Saxon Gospel, p. 538.

Now the feast of the Epiphany, or the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles, is *Festum Duplex*, in the calendars above cited, or an holy day of the first rank, and has there its octave (as likewise it very anciently had*) which falls upon the 13th of January, or the 20th day after Christmas; and you will find, upon trial, that Christmas-Day, as the old saying, in these Northern parts imports, is, one of the twenty days of festivity, supposing that feast to be kept till the octave of the Epiphany, and not one of the twelve, if you terminate the observation of it on the day of the Epiphany itself. Whereupon, I observe, that the feast of the Nativity was anciently prolonged, in some respects, till the said twentieth day; the expression here under consideration clearly implies it; but this was the utmost extent; for the Plough-Monday, which is the Monday after the twelfth day, when the labour of the plough, and the other rustic toils begin, never is extended further than the twentieth day, nor can be, for, indeed, it can never extend so far, unless the twelfth day happen on a Monday. The Feast of the Nativity, I say, was prolonged to the twentieth day in some respects, and, I might have added, with some persons, because the countryman generally returned to his labours before that day; to wit, on the Monday after the twelfth day, and that it was only with the better sort, who were more at leisure, and in respect of the church service, that the feast was extended to the twentieth day. The words of Bishop Sparrow are so full to the purpose, on this point, that I shall recite them: "But when we say, that the church would have these high feasts continued so long, it is not so to be understood, as if she required an equal observance of those several days; for some

* Dr. Mareschal's Observations on Saxon Gospels, p. 528 and 533. Johnson's Collection of Canons, etc., Anno MCLXXV. sect. 14. N.B. Mr. Wheatley seems to doubt, whether the Apparition of our Lord, mentioned in this last author, means the Epiphany or the Transfiguration: But it means the former, as is evident from comparing the beginning of the preface, *Quia cum unigenitus tuus*, in Dr. Wilkins's Councils, i. p. 478, with the Roman Missal on the Epiphany, where you have a preface that begins so.

of those days she commands by her cannons and rubricks,* some she seems only to commend to us, to be observed ; some are of a higher festivity, some of less. The first and the last, namely, the octave of the first, are usually the chief days for solemn assemblies ; yet every one of those days should be spent in more than ordinary meditation of the blessings of the time, and thanksgiving for them : According to that which the Lord commanded to the Jews concerning the feast of tabernacles (Lev. xxiii. 36). Upon every one of the days of that feast an offering was to be made, but the first and last were the solemn convocations."† You see clearly here the original of the octaves, that it was a practice borrowed from the Jews ; that the intermediate days, between the feast and its octave, were of more relax'd observation, and, consequently, that the husbandman might take to his plough on the Monday after the twelfth day,‡ though it was within the octave of that feast ; lastly, that the octave was, nevertheless, a festival to be observed by all.

I observe, lastly, that the Manifestation of our Saviour to the Gentiles, was always reckoned a part of the Christmas solemnity, according to the saying above, That Christmas-Day was not one of the twelve. We consider it at this time as such ; the octave, consequently, of that feast must be so too. And this is no more than proper, especially in these Western parts of the world ; for, as the inhabitants thereof, ourselves for example, were of the number of those Gentiles, the imparting of the Gospel to the Gentiles was a matter of the utmost consequence to us, and so is very justly made an appendage to the festival of the Nativity.

To comprize the whole in a few words ; the twentieth day is the octave of the Epiphany, which festival, with its octave, was usually included in the grand festival of Christmas ; the festival is apparently so now, according to every one's apprehension, and the octave, in the nature of things, and according to the usual proceedings of the liturgies in such cases, is an essential part of that festival ; and, tho' manual labour did in truth begin before the said octave, or twentieth day, as has been shewn, yet this was always antiently reckoned a day of obligation nevertheless, and by our ancestors was constantly kept as an holy day, and that both by the labourer and the gentleman ; for, though the labourer might be allowed to begin to work before, as is said, yet he was always supposed and expected to observe the octave, or the last day, as is now, I think, very generally done.

Yours, etc.,

T. ROWE.

* Easter-Monday and Tuesday, Whitsun-Monday and Tuesday.

† Sparrow's Rationale, p. 170.

‡ On this day the young men yoke themselves, and draw a plough about with musick, and one or two persons, in antic dresses, like jack-puddings, go from house to house, to gather money to drink ; if you refuse them, they plow up your dung-hill. We call them here [see note 2] the Plough-Bullocks.

Festivals held before the Reformation.

[1807, *Part I.*, pp. 201-204.]

Some of your readers will probably not be displeased at seeing a catalogue of the Festivals which were celebrated in the Church of England before the Reformation. A certain number of them are enumerated in the Calendar which is prefixed to the book of common-prayer; but as that list is very defective, I have taken the trouble of examining the Breviary of Salisbury with a considerable degree of care and attention. I have intentionally omitted a few festivals which are mentioned in the Calendar of the Breviary, but which appear to have been confined to particular dioceses, instead of being generally observed throughout the province of Canterbury. My edition of the Breviary is dated 1556, printed in London by Kingston and Sutton. I have added marks to distinguish the different classes of festivals, with an enumeration of these classes from the Rubrics of the Breviary.

The Protestant reader will observe that the two festivals of St. Thomas of Canterbury (July 7, December 29) are placed in a higher class than those of most of the Apostles. The Visitation of the blessed Virgin (July 2), a festival of modern institution, which commemorates the meeting of Mary and her cousin Elizabeth, as recorded by the Evangelist Luke, is also a greater solemnity than the Annunciation. St. Anne, the imaginary mother of the Virgin, was received by our ancestors as a Saint; but St. Joachim, the equally imaginary husband of St. Anne, has no day set apart to his honour. None of the later monastic Legislators (Bernard, Francis, Dominic, etc.), who fill the pages of the present Roman Breviary, are inserted in the Liturgy of the Church of Salisbury. It may be presumed that the secular clergy were not disposed to honour the memory of men with whose disciples they waged a constant war.

The original preface to the Common-prayer-book complains, with great justice, of the number and hardness of the rules called the *Pic*, or *Pica*. Many of these rules relate to the concurrence of two different solemnities on the same day, and the translation, commemoration, or omission of one of them. As our English Liturgy has laid down no rules on this subject, perhaps a few of the regulations of the ancient *Pica* may not be wholly uninteresting.

A double feast which fell on any Sunday in Advent, or from Septuagesima to Easter, on Ash Wednesday, on Maundy Thursday, or any of the ten following days, on Ascension day, on Whitsunday, on Whitsun-eve, or any of the eight following days or on Corpus Christi-day, was transferred to the nearest day afterwards, on which it could conveniently be celebrated; except principal and greater double feasts, which might be celebrated on the three last Sundays in Advent, and on Septuagesima and the six following Sundays.

A simple feast, *cum regimine Chori*, which fell on any Sunday in Advent, on Septuagesima and the six following Sundays, on Ash Wednesday, on the Octave of Easter, on Ascension-day and its Octave, on Trinity Sunday, or on Corpus Christi-day and its Octave, was transferred, in like manner, as a double feast.

A simple feast, *cum regimine Chori*, which fell on Passion-Sunday, and the twenty following days, or on Whitsun-eve and the seven following days, was not transferred, but entirely omitted.

Simple feasts, *sine regimine Chori*, were never transferred, but either commemorated or entirely omitted on the days on which they could not be celebrated. Very minute rules are laid down as to the commemoration or omission. Those which I have adduced may suffice as a specimen of the whole.

EYLES TEMPLER.

OF THE DIVISION OF FEASTS.

Feasts are divided into double and simple. Double feasts are subdivided into principal (marked 1), greater (2), less (3), and inferior (4). Simple feasts are either *cum regimine Chori*, or *sine regimine Chori*. Simple feasts *cum regimine Chori*, have either *Invitatorium triplex* (5), or *Invitatorium duplex* (6). Simple feasts *sine regimine Chori* have either *Invitatorium duplex* (7), or *Invitatorium simplex* (8). Those which are only commemorated in the service of the day are marked 9. Those which were formerly celebrated, but in latter times entirely omitted, on account of some solemn festival of recent institution, are marked 0.

Besides the feasts marked in the catalogue, Easter-day, Ascension-day, Whitsunday, the Feast of the Patron Saint, and the Anniversary of the Dedication of the Church, are principal double feasts. Trinity Sunday, Corpus Christi-day, and the Feast of the Relicks (which is always observed on the second Sunday in July) are greater double feasts. Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, in Easter and Whitsun weeks, and the Octave of Easter, are less double feasts. By a constitution of the province of Canterbury, the Feast of St. George ought to be observed as a greater double; but it is usually kept only as an inferior double.

The translations of St. Edward the Martyr (June 20), of St. Benedict (July 11), and of St. Cuthbert (September 4), belong to the class 6, when the other feasts of those Saints (March 18, 20, 21) happen on or after Passion Sunday (*i.e.* the fifth Sunday in Lent). In this case, the feast which falls in March is entirely omitted, and only the translation celebrated.

Those feasts which are marked with an asterisk belong to the class 6, when they happen on Sunday. All other feasts of the classes 7 and 8 belong to the class 9 when they happen on Sunday.

In the following catalogue, the abbreviations are to be thus explained: A. Apostle, Ab. Abbot, C. Confessor, D. Doctor, E. Bishop, Ev. Evangelist, M. Martyr, P. Pope, Pr. Priest, R. King, S. Saint, V. Virgin.

JANUARIUS.			14. Tiburtii, Valeriani et Maximi MM.		
1. Circumcisio Domini.	3		19. Alphegi EM.	7	
2. Octava S. Stephani.	6		23. Georgii M.	4	
3. Octava S. Joannis.	6		25. Marci Ev.	4	
4. Octava SS. Innocentium.	9		28. Vitalis M.	6	
5. Octava S. Thomæ.	6		MAIUS.		
<i>ib.</i> Edwardi RC.	9		1. Philippi et Jacobi AA.	4	
6. Epiphania Domini	1		3. Inventio S. Crucis.	3	
8. Luciani Pr. et Sociorum MM.	9		<i>ib.</i> Alexandri, Eventii et Theoduli MM.	9	
13. Octava Epiphaniæ.	5		6. Joannis A. ante portam Latinam.	5	
<i>ib.</i> Hilarii EC.	9		7. Joannis Beverlacensis EC.	6	
14. Felicii Pr. M.	8		10. Gordiani et Epimachi MM.	7	
15. Mauri Ab.	8		12. Nerei, Achillei et Pancratii MM.	7	
16. Marcelli PM.	8		19. Dunstani EC.	6	
17. Sulpicii EC.	8		<i>ib.</i> Potentianæ V.	9	
18. Priscæ VM.	8		25. Aldelmi EC.	6	
19. Wolstani EC.	6		<i>ib.</i> Urbani PM.	9	
20. Fabiani et Sebastiani MM.	6		26. Augustini Anglorum Apostoli.	4	
21. Agnetis VM.	6		28. Germani Parisiensis EC.	7	
22. Vincetii M.	6		31. Petronillæ V.	8	
25. Conversio S. Pauli.	5		JUNIUS.		
<i>ib.</i> Præjecti M.	9		1. Nicomedis M.	8	
27. Juliani EC.	7		2. Marcellini et Petri MM.	7	
28. Agnetis secundo.	7		5. Bonifacii et Sociorum MM.	7	
30. Bathildis Reginae.	8		8. Medardi et Gildardi EECC.	8	
FEBRUARIUS.			9. Translatio S. Edmundi EC.	5	
1. Brigidæ V.	8		<i>ib.</i> Primi et Feliciani MM.	9	
2. Purificatio B. Mariæ.	2		11. Barnabæ A.	5	
3. Blasii EM.	7		12. Basilidis, Cyrini, Naboris et Nazarii MM.	7	
5. Agathæ VM.	6		14. Basilii EC.	7	
6. Vedasti et Amandi EECC.	8		15. Viti, Modesti et Crescentiæ MM.	7	
10. Scholasticæ V.	8		16. Translatio S. Richardi	6	
14. Valentini M.	7		<i>ib.</i> Cyrici et Julitæ MM.	9	
16. Julianæ VM.	7		18. Marci et Marcelliani MM.	7	
22. Cathedra S. Petri.	5		19. Gervasii et Protasii MM.	7	
24. Matthiæ A.	4		20. Translatio S. Edwardi RM.	7	
MARTIUS.			22. Albani Protomartyris Anglorum.	6	
1. David EC.	6		23. Etheldredæ V.	8	
2. Ceddæ EC.	6		24. Nativitas S. Jo. Bapt.	3	
7. Perpetuæ et Felicitatis MM.	8		26. Joannis et Pauli MM.	*7	
8. Gregorii PCD.	4		28. Leonis PC.	8	
18. Edwardi RM.	6		29. Petri et Pauli AA.	3	
20. Cuthberti EC.	6		30. Commem. S. Pauli.	5	
21. Benedicti Ab.	6		JULIUS.		
25. Annunciatio B. Mariæ.	3		1. Octava S. Jo. Bapt.	7	
APRILIS.			2. Visitatio B. Mariæ.	2	
3. Richardi EC.	6				
4. Ambrosii ECD.	4				

NOVEMBER.					
1. Festum omnium SS.	2		26. Lini PM.		8
2. Commem. animarum.	6		29. Saturnini et Sisinnii MM.		8
6. Leonardi Ab.	6		30. Andreæ A.		4
8. Quatuor coronatorum MM.	7		DECEMBER.		
9. Theodori M.	8				
11. Martini EC.	5		4. Osmundi EC.		6
<i>ib.</i> Mennæ M.	9		6. Nicolai EC.		5
13. Britii EC.	*7		7. Octava S. Andreæ.		7
15. Machuti EC.	6		8. Conceptio B. Mariæ.		3
16. Edmundi EC.	5		13. Lucie VM.		6
17. Hugonis EC.	6		21. Thomæ A.		4
<i>ib.</i> Aniani EC.	9		25. Nativitas Domini nostri Jesu Christi.		1
18. Octava S. Martini.	7		<i>ib.</i> Anastasie VM.		9
20. Edmundi RM.	6		26. Stephani Protomartyris.		3
22. Cæcilie VM.	6		27. Joannis A. Ev.		3
23. Clementis PM.	6		28. SS. Innocentium MM.		3
<i>ib.</i> Felicitatis M.	9		29. Thomæ EM.		3
24. Chrysogoni M.	8		31. Sylvestri PC.		6
25. Catharinæ VM.	6				

January 1.—New Year's Day.

[1791, pp. 1169, 1170.]

Almost every county in England has some amusement or local custom nearly peculiar to itself; and your deeming many of such not unworthy of being brought out to the public eye, has induced me to transmit to you an account of one or two, which I never saw any where except in Westmorland and Cumberland. To the numerous Saint-days that our Calendar points out, a great share of that class of men called journeymen add one more, which they term Saint Monday; yet you probably never heard of a Saint New Year's-day, though such an one there is, and that too very faithfully kept in many parts of the two Northern counties. Early in the morning of the first of January, the *Fæx Populi* assemble together, carrying stangs and baskets. Any inhabitant, stranger, or whoever joins not this ruffian tribe in sacrificing to their favourite Saint-day, if unfortunate enough to be met by any of the band, is immediately mounted across the stang (if a woman, she is basketed), and carried, shoulder height, to the nearest public-house, where the payment of sixpence immediately liberates the prisoner. No respect is paid to any person; the cobbler on that day thinks himself equal to the parson, who generally gets mounted like the rest of his flock: whilst one of his porters boasts and prides himself in having but just before got the 'Squire across the pole. None, though ever so industriously inclined, are permitted to follow their respective avocations on that day.—Such amusements, Mr. Urban, are something similar to the fable of the Children and the Frogs, amusing to the performers, but disagreeable to those who are thus unwillingly exalted above their neighbours, and made subject to accidents, which annually happen. An acquaintance with whom

I was walking, in endeavouring to avoid the stang, received a severe stroke on his groin, which confined him to his room some days. I should be glad to see any of your correspondents explain the origin of this custom ; which, until prevented by the interfering hand of the magistrate, I fear will continue.

Another, equally as absurd, though not attended with such serious consequences, deserves to be noticed. In September, or October, the Master is locked out of the school by the scholars, who, previous to his admittance, give an account of the different holidays for the ensuing year, which he promises to observe, and signs his name to the Orders, as they are called, with two bondsmen. The return of these signed Orders is the signal of capitulation ; the doors are immediately opened ; beef, beer, and wine, deck the festive board ; and the day is spent in mirth. Even at so early an age, the idea of liberty and power beats high in the breast of these English, beardless heroes ; and this, as well as the former, has something of the present Gallic spirit in it. [See *Gent. Mag. Library*, "Manners and Customs," pp. 164-173.]

T. C.

[1790, *p.* 352.]

Junius asks, "In what book can be found an account of those Popular Antiquities, April Fool day, and a custom prevalent in Yorkshire, for the keeper of the Pinfold to go about on the eve of New Year's day with the rabble at his heels ; who, at the end of some balderdash verses or rhymes, shout, "Hagman Heigh !" [See note 3.]

[1820, *Part I.*, pp. 15, 16.]

As your pages are peculiarly devoted to the illustration of every thing that is curious in Antiquity ; some of your Readers may be able to explain the origin of the following custom :

On returning from the country, I happened to sleep at St. Alban's on the night of the 31st of December last, and was awakened early the next morning by a confused noise of boys and girls in the street, crying for sale "Popladys ! Popladys !"

Enquiring at breakfast-time the meaning of those words, I was informed, that it was a very ancient practice in that town, to cry and sell in the streets and in the Bakers' shops, on New Year's Day, a species of cake or bun, called Poplady, one of which was brought to me. It was a plain cake, like the Cross Buns sold on Good Friday ; but instead of being circular was long and narrow, rudely resembling the human figure, with two dried raisins or currants stuck in to mark the eyes, and another to represent the mouth, the lower part being formed somewhat like the outer case of an Egyptian mummy.

As the Abbey of St. Alban's is celebrated in Monkish story, it is probable that this cake is a relic of Romish superstition : perhaps a variety of the Yule Cake, which we are told, in Brand's "Popular

Antiquities," was sometimes made in confectionery to represent the infant Christ or the Virgin Mary. But whence the name of Poplady? Can it be a corruption of Pope Lady—the female Pope—alluding to the fabulous tale of Pope Joan, recorded by Platina in his "History of Sovereign Pontiffs?" [2nd edit., 1688.]

If you, Sir, or any of your Correspondents, can throw any light on this curious, though ridiculous custom, it will oblige,

S. P.

January 6th.—Twelfth Day.

[1759, p. 42.]

Being twelfth-day, his majesty went to the chapel royal, with the usual solemnity, and offered gold, myrrh, and frankincense, in three purses, at the altar, according to antient custom.

[1784, Part I., pp. 98, 99.]

Your anonymous correspondent, vol. liii. p. 928, having said that he never heard of *Lamb's-wool*, or Christmas-eve, and cannot guess the meaning, I am induced to trouble you with the following attempt at an explanation of what was meant by the expression. [See *post*, p. 44, and *sub voce* "Christmas."]

In that part of Yorkshire (near Leedes) where I was born and spent my youth, I remember when I was a boy that it was customary for many families on the twelfth eve of Christmas (not on Christmas-eve, as your correspondent [*ante*, p. 6], mentions) to invite their relations, friends, and neighbours to their houses to play at cards, and to partake of a supper, of which minced pies were an indispensable ingredient; and after supper was brought in the *Wassail Cup* or *Wassail Bowl*, being a large bowl, such as is now used for punch, filled with sweetened ale and roasted apples. I have seen bowls used for this purpose that held above a gallon. A plate of spiced cake was first handed about to the company, and then the Wassail Bowl, of which everyone partook by taking with a spoon out of the ale a roasted apple, and eating it, and then drinking the healths of the company out of the Bowl, wishing them a merry Christmas* and a happy New Year. The ingredients put into the bowl; viz., ale, sugar, nutmeg, and roasted apples, were usually called *Lamb's-wool*, and the night on which it used to be drunk (which was generally on the twelfth-eve) was commonly called *Wassail Eve*.

I am of opinion that the custom was very ancient; but from whence it arose, or why the mixture was called *Lamb's-wool*, I do not at present pretend to account. Shakespeare certainly alluded to it in

* The festival of Christmas used in this part of the country to hold for twenty days, and some persons extended it to Candlemas. [See *ante*, p. 7.]

his *Midsummer Night's Dream*, where he makes Puck, or Robin Goodfellow, say :

“ Sometimes lurk I in a gossip's bowl,
In very likeness of a roasted crab,*
And when she drinks against her lips I bob,
And on her withered dewlap pour the ale.”

A very common accident, especially to old people, who oftentimes had as much *Lamb's-wool* in the bowl as they could lift to their heads, and sometimes more than they could do so without assistance.

Since the alteration of the style, the *Wassail Bowl* or *Wassail Cup*, as it was called, is so much gone into disuse in this part of the country, that I have scarcely seen it introduced into company these thirty years. Indeed, the festival of Christmas is not celebrated since that period as it used to be in my remembrance.

We have in this place a very ancient custom yet kept up, viz., the *Curfeu Bells*, called here *Culfer*, i.e. that is, *Cool-fire* ; which are two of the church bells rung alternately, every morning and evening at seven o'clock, during the twelve days of Christmas only, and at no other time of the year. They make a most disagreeable sound.

JOSIAH BECKWITH.

P.S.—Furmety used, in my remembrance, to be always the breakfast and supper on Christmas-eve in this country. [See also *post*, p. 29.]

[1791, p. 116.]

A few days since, looking over *The General Evening Post*, among some old customs there noticed as being observed in the days of our venerable ancestor Alfred, it says, “ In Glostershire the custom much prevails of having, on Twelfth-day, 12 small fires, and one large one, made in many parishes there in honour of the day.” As I have some reason to think this custom is more generally observed with us in Herefordshire, and as I have myself been for many years a constant attendant on this festive occasion, I will beg leave to give you the particulars of the whole, as it is still kept up in most parishes here.

It is here observed under the name of *Wassailing* (which I need not say to you is a Saxon custom), in the following manner : On the eve of Twelfth-day, at the approach of evening, the farmers, their friends, servants, etc., all assemble, and, near six o'clock, all walk together to a field where wheat is growing. The highest part of the ground is always chosen, where 12 small fires and one large one are lighted up. The attendants, headed by the master of the family, pledge the company in old cyder, which circulates freely on these occasions. A circle is formed round the large fire, when a general shout and hallooing takes place, which you hear answered from all

* Crab-apple.

the villages and fields near ; as I have myself counted 50 or 60 fires burning at the same time, which are generally placed on some eminence. This being finished, the company all return to the house, where the good housewife and her maids are preparing a good supper, which on this occasion is very plentiful. A large cake is always provided, with a hole in the middle. After supper, the company all attend the bailiff (or head of the oxen) to the Wain-house, where the following particulars are observed: the master, at the head of his friends, fills the cup (generally of strong ale), and stands opposite the first or finest of the oxen (24 of which I have often seen tied up in their stalls together); he then pledges him in a curious toast; the company then follow his example with all the other oxen, addressing each by their name. This being over, the large cake is produced, and is, with much ceremony, put on the horn of the first ox, through the hole in the cake; he is then tickled to make him toss his head: if he throws the cake behind, it is the mistress's perquisite; if before (in what is termed the boosy), the bailiff claims this prize. This ended, the company all return to the house, the doors of which are in the mean time locked, and not opened till some joyous songs are sung. On entering, a scene of mirth and jollity commences, and reigns thro' the house till a late, or rather an early, hour, the next morning. Cards are introduced, and the merry tale goes round. I have often enjoyed the hospitality, friendship, and harmony, I have been witness to on these occasions. I have not time, or indeed room, to add more at present. Some other time you shall hear of some other of our Herefordshire customs.

J. W.

[1791, pp. 403, 404.]

Your Hereford correspondent, J. W.'s, account in your entertaining Miscellany, p. 116, of a custom observed in his county on Twelfth-eve, induces me to transmit you one not very unlike, which prevails in the other most noted part of this kingdom for cyder, the South-hams of Devonshire.

On the eve of the Epiphany, the farmer, attended by his workmen, with a large pitcher of cyder, goes to the orchard, and there, encircling one of the best bearing trees, they drink the following toast three several times:

“Here's to thee, old apple tree,
Whence thou may'st bud, and whence thou may'st blow I
And whence thou may'st bear apples enow I
Hats full !—caps full !
Bushel !—bushel—sacks full !
And my pockets full too !
HUZZA !”

This done, they return to the house, the doors of which they are sure to find bolted by the females, who, be the weather what it may,

are inexorable to all intreaties to open them till some one has guessed at what is on the spit, which is generally some nice little thing, difficult to be hit on, and is the reward of him who first names it. The doors are then thrown open, and the lucky clodpole receives the tit-bit as his recompence. Some are so superstitious as to believe that, if they neglect this custom, the trees will bear no apples that year.

Yours, etc., ALPHONSO.

[1820, *Part II.*, pp. 418, 419.]

In your Magazine for January last [see note 4.] I observed your Correspondent A. B. and C. gives a concise account of the antient custom of Wassailing, that formerly was much celebrated in many parts of Herefordshire, and in some parts of Gloucestershire. As I have many years been an attendant on these social and hospitable meetings, permit me to offer to your readers some particulars of this ceremony, as I have seen it kept up, with all due form, on the farm of Huntington,* two miles West from Hereford, that for many years was occupied by my late respectable friend and neighbour, Mr. Samuel Tully, well known to the publick, and many of your readers, as a farmer and grazier, more particularly distinguished for his excellent and beautiful breed of cattle. Among many visitors to Mr. Tully, at Huntington, to see his fine stock of cattle, I remember meeting the late Duke of Bedford, Lord Somerville, Sir Richard Colt Hoare, and other well-known amateurs in fine animals. A few years preceding the very unfortunate death of Mr. Tully,† I, for the last time, witnessed the joyous scene of Wassailing.

On the eve of Twelfth-day (the Epiphany) Mr. Tully and his numerous visitors, near the hour of six o'clock in the evening, walked to a field where wheat was growing, and on the highest parts of the land one large and twelve smaller fires were lighted up. While burning, the master and some of his company, formed in a circle round the larger fire, and after pledging each other in good Herefordshire cyder, all the attendants joined in shouting and rejoicing. On the fires being extinguished, the company all returned to the hospitable mansion, where an excellent and plentiful supper was provided for the family, and all ranks of visitors. After the glass had circulated, and

* Huntington farm is one mile from White Cross, on the road from Hereford to South Wales, and to the Roman station of Ariconium. The view of Hereford from this well-known Cross, which makes an excellent foreground, is extremely grand; I have frequently drawn it from recollection, and particularly did so on the day I was with the Monks on Mount St. Barnard in August, 1816, going to Italy, for the two reasons that pleased the Prior, as it showed him the town in England where I generally resided, and a cross built by a Catholic Bishop (Char-ton), in 1347, whose monument and arms (as on the Cross) are in Hereford Cathedral. This Cross has been often engraved (see *Gent. Mag.*, vol. lxii., p. 298), and particularly in Britton's "Architectural Antiquities."

† He was killed by a vicious bull, in a field near his own house.

some songs had been sung, and happiness diffused through all the numerous company, near the hour of nine or ten o'clock, a second procession was formed, by all who joined in the concluding and more interesting ceremony. On coming to the out-house, where the oxen and cows were in their stalls, the bailiff attended with a large plum-cake, which, when made, had a hole in the middle. Previous to its being placed on the horn of the ox, the master and his friends each took a small cup with ale, and drank a toast to each ox, in nearly the following words (each of the 24 oxen having a name): the master began with the first:

"Here's to thee, Benbaw,* and to thy white horn,
God send thy master a good crop of corn;
Of wheat, rye, and barley, and all sorts of grain;
You eat your oats, and I'll drink my beer;
May the Lord send us all a happy new year!"

After the last ox was toasted, the bailiff placed the cake on the horn of the first ox, the boy touching him with a pointed goad. This induced the ox to shake his head, when the cake was tossed on either side; if on one side, it was to be the perquisite of the bailiff, who divided it amongst the company. On returning to the house, mirth and feasting prevailed till a late, or rather an early hour.

The Harvest-supper is frequently celebrated at this time. Much of the ceremony is now omitted. The twelve fires are frequently made, and concluded by a social evening. I have lately, near six o'clock in the evening of Wassailing, from our public walk, the side of the Castle, if the evening proved clear, seen numerous fires on the hills around, particularly on the camps of Dynedor, Aconbury, Credenhill, etc., scenes many of your Antiquarian readers well know.

J. W.

Feb. 2.—Candlemas Day.

[1734, p. 103.]

Being Candlemas Day, there was a grand entertainment at the Temple Hall, for the Judges, Sergeants-at-law, etc. The Prince of Wales was there *incog.*, the Lord Chancellor, Earl of Macclesfield, Bishop of Bangor, and several persons of quality. Mr. Baker was Master of the Ceremonies, and received all the company; at night there was a comedy acted by the Company of His Majesty's Revels from the Theatre in the Haymarket, called "Love for Love;" and the Societies of the Temple presented the Comedians with £50. The antient ceremony of the Judges, etc., dancing round our coal fire, and singing an old French song, was performed with great decency. [See note 5.]

* The ox's name, a common one.

Monday before Lent.

[1790, *p.* 506.]

We have an ancient custom of living on fried rashers on the Monday before Lent. May not this be a remnant of Popery that has not yet receded from this distant quarter, when the Catholicks left off the use of flesh for the forty days of Lent?

RETROSPECTOR.

[Shrove Tuesday.

[1779, *p.* 536.]

Sir David Dalrymple, in his "Annals of Scotland," lately published, thinks it improbable, because inconsistent with the religious rigour of the times, that Margery, daughter of King Robert the First, in 1316, should take the diversion of hunting on a Shrove Tuesday. But Shrove Tuesday, as soon as the *Shrift*, or confession at Mattins, was celebrated, was a day of extraordinary festivity (*sic*) and indulgence, in consideration of the long season of fasting and humiliation which commenced on the following day. This point is clearly and ingeniously proved in the second volume of Mr. Warton's "History of English Poetry," p. 387.

T. T.

[1780, *p.* 28.]

There is a passage in Stowe's chronicle which abundantly confirms Mr. Warton's reasoning about the festivities of Shrove-Tuesday; and shews that a princess, in the fourteenth century, might on that day indulge herself in the sports of the field, without incurring the censures of the Church. The passage is this, under the year 1526:

"On Shrove Tuesday there was holden solemne justes at Greenwich, the King and eleven others on the one part, and the Marques of Excester with eleven other on the contrarie part," etc.—Chron. fol. 526, col. 2, edit. 1615.

D.

[1790, *Part I.*, *p.* 256.]

Antiquarius asks, "Whence originated the custom at Westminster school, of the under-clerk of the college entering on Shrove Tuesday into the school; and, preceded by the Beadle and the other officers, of throwing a large pancake over the bar, which divides the upper from the under school?"

[1790, *p.* 495.]

Shrive is an old Saxon word (of which *Shrove* is a corruption), and signifies confession. Hence *Shrove-Tuesday* signifies Confession-Tuesday; on which day all the people in every parish throughout England (during the Romish times) were obliged to confess their

sins, one by one, to their own parish priests, in their own parish churches; and, that this might be done the more regularly, the great bell in every parish was rung at ten o'clock (or perhaps sooner), that it might be heard by all, and that they might attend, according to the custom then in use. And as the Romish religion has given way to a much better, I mean the Protestant religion, yet the custom of ringing the great bell in our ancient parish churches, at least in some of them, yet remains, and obtains in and about London the name of *Pancake-bell*; perhaps, because, after the confession, it was customary for the several persons to dine on *pancakes* or *fritters*. Latter churches, indeed, have rejected that custom of ringing the bell on Shrove-Tuesday; but the usage of dining on *pancakes* or *fritters*, and such-like provision, still continues.

Yours, etc.,

W. T.

[The communications on the custom of throwing at cocks during Shrove Tide are summarized in the notes. See note 6.]

February 14.—Valentine's Day.

[1805, *Part I*, pp. 28-30.]

As the 14th of next month is a day anxiously looked for by the youth of both sexes, in the expectation of exercising their ingenuity in forming those amorous billets denominated "Valentines," I beg leave, through the channel of your Magazine, to offer a few suggestions to parents and guardians on the subject of these productions.

As my family were sitting at breakfast, the two-penny-post-man brought in five letters. Three of these were directed to the young ladies; the other two were on business, to myself. My eldest daughter who never receives any letter which she would wish to conceal from her parents, finding that her billet contained what appeared to be Poetry, began to read it to us; but she fortunately had not gone beyond the second line, when I recollected (from having heard of them in my boyish days) what the sequel was; and, snatching, as quick as lightning, the abominable Valentine from her hands before she could possibly arrive at the meaning, threw it upon the fire, congratulating my daughter on having escaped reading the most horrid obscenity that depravity could invent.

A young lady, an inmate in my house, over whom I had not the same authority as over my own daughter, had by this time opened her packet of painted trumpery; and began to read the verses aloud. No sooner heard I the first line, than I knew it to contain ribaldry more shockingly indecent, if possible, than the former; I therefore made free to snatch that one also out of the reader's hand, assuring my young friend that, if she had gone to the end of it, she never could again have looked me, or either of the young gentlemen who were then sitting at the table with us, in the face.

The third was then handed to me by my youngest daughter unopened. This was also a Valentine, but contained only a few innocent lines.

Yours, etc., W. CHAMBERLAINE.

First Sunday in Lent.

[1754, p. 508.]

In the table for 24 years, prefixed to the "hore intemperate beate marie virginis secundum usum romanum," printed by Thielman Kerver [see note 7], the first column is "la date de l'année," the second "les brandons," the third "pasques," etc., and so afterwards to explain the table 'tis written, "Qui veult scavoir les brandons, pasques, etc." And it appears evidently from the table, that the "brandons" correspond to what we call quadragesima, or the First Sunday in Lent. But how comes the First Sunday in Lent to be called "les brandons"? You will find nothing in any French dictionary, not even in Cotgrave or Menagius, that will clear this; and therefore we must try further.

Now Sir Henry Spelman, in his glossary, tells us that "brandeum" signifies a veil. These are his words: "Brandeum opperimenti quidpiam sanctorum reliquiis impositum ne temere violentur. velum, sudarium, V. Baron. to. 1. § 12. li. 5. et v. inf. *Sanctuarium*. * *Flodoard. hist. eccl. rem. lib. 1. cap. 20. Corpus ejusdem rubeo constat brandeo involutum, et cap. 21. Sudarium — cum parte prædicti brandei scriniolo reconditum eburneo*." But what has this to do with the case in hand? I answer, it was the custom at this penitential season to hang a veil before the altar, and all the ornaments of it, and to begin particularly to do it on this day, the First Sunday in Lent, from whence this First Sunday came to be called by the French "les brandons," as much as to say, "the Sunday of the Veils." All this I assert upon the authority of Durantus, in his "rationale divinorum officiorum," from whom take the following passages: Fol. clxi., speaking of the First Sunday in Lent, he says, "Ab hac die usque ad parasceuen opperiant cruces, et velum ante altare suspendunt, de quo in prima parte dictum est sub ti. de picturis." The purport of which is, "from this day unto Easter-even they cover the crosses, and hang a veil before the altar, of which I have already spoken in the first part of this work, where I treat of pictures and ornaments." The place here referred to is fol. ix., where we read, "Sane omnia que ad ornatum pertinent, tempore quadragesime removeri vel contegi debent. Quod fit secundum aliquos in dominica de passione, quod extunc divinitas fuit absconsa et velata in Christo. Dimisit enim se capi et flagellari ut homo, tanquam non haberet in se virtutem divinitatis. Unde in evangelio hujus diei dicitur, *Jesus autem abscondit se et exiit de templo*."

* The author tho' has nothing concerning it in that place.

Tunc ergo *cooperiunt cruces*, i. virtus sue divinitatis absconditur. Alii hoc faciunt a *prima dominica quadragesime*, quod extunc ecclesia incipit de ejus passione agere. Unde eo tempore crux ab ecclesia non nisi cooperta portari debet, etc. "Indeed, all things which relate to ornament, in the time of Lent, ought either to be remov'd or covered, which by some is done on Passion Sunday, because from that time the divinity of our Lord was hidden and *veiled*; for he suffered himself to be taken and whipt as a man, as if he had not the divinity inherent in him. From whence, in the gospel of this day, 'tis said, '*But Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple.*' Then, therefore, they cover the crosses, that is, the power of the divinity is hidden. Others do this *from* the First Sunday of Lent, because from that time the church begins to treat and think of his passion, and therefore at that time the cross ought not to be carried from the church uncovered." "Brandon," therefore, is a veil, and "les brandons" in the table, may not improperly be translated "Veil Sundays."

Yours, etc.,
S. P.

[1754, p. 568.]

In your Mag. for last month, p. 508, I observed S. P.'s explanation of the French word *Brandons*, as it stands prefixed to *Thielman Kerver's* table. It appears, indeed, from his quotations, to mean a veil, and that it denotes the First Sunday in Lent; but yet, I believe, it is not to be apply'd to that ceremony of veiling images and altars in the Roman church, which is not reckoned so material as to need to acquaint the people with it, by inserting it in any table or kalendar. The true meaning, therefore, is to be found, I presume, in that other ceremony of the same church, of veiling new-married couples; which the priest performs by spreading a veil over the parties immediately after he has joined their hands. From the First Sunday in Advent to the Epiphany, and from Ash Wednesday to Low Sunday, marriages are forbid to be performed in church; but in some countries, as in Spain, where they allow of private marriages in houses, the marriage rites may be there performed, during these intervals of prohibition, all to the ceremony of veiling, which the priest defers till the parties come afterwards to church. It was necessary to acquaint the people with the times in which marriages could be solemnized, so they varied every year according to the moveable feasts; and it was customary in some places to place the notice thereof in their almanacks; and in Spain, where the marriage may be performed, but not the veiling, they at this day mark it in their almanacks in the following manner:

- "Advent Sunday.—Veilings shut.
- "Epiphany.—Veilings open.
- "Ash Wednesday.—Veilings shut.
- "Low Sunday.—Veilings open."

Now, as these prohibitions may have varied, according to the times and countries, so, in Kerver's time, it might have been only from the first Sunday in Lent, instead of Ash Wednesday, and his diocese may have followed the custom in Spain of putting down *veiling*, instead of *marriage*, in their almanacks, or calendar tables; as the latter could be performed in private, tho' not the former. The ceremony of veiling images don't commence at present in the church of Rome *till Passion Sunday*. 'Tis the Sexton's business, and of the least consequence of any of their superfluous pageantry.

G

[1755. pp. 174, 175.]

It plainly appears from Gregory of Tours, Bede, Du Cange, and others that *Brandeum* was a word made use of in the days of what is called the *base Latinity*, to signify not only the veils or coverings of the corpses of saints and their relicks, as your learned correspondent Mr. S. P. observes from Sir H. Spelman, but that the same name was also given to any handkerchief or napkin which had only touched such sacred remains. Till after the time of St. Gregory the Great, who was pope about the year 600, none were permitted to touch the bodies of saints; and instead of their bones, it was deemed sufficient to send a piece of cloth that had wiped them, in a box. St. Gregory expressly mentions this custom, and adds, that in the popedom of St. Leo, about the year 450, certain Greeks having doubted of the virtue of these veils, that pontiff, for their conviction, took a knife and cut a *Brandeum* in two before their eyes; upon which blood issued in plenty, as if it had been the living body of the saint. So much for *Brandeum*, as to which I differ not materially from your friend. But that Kerver's *Brandons* signifies anything like veils, as the same gentleman would have it to do, I can by no means admit. *Brandon* is an old French word, which signifies a wisp of straw. Thus *Brandons panonçaux* is a law term, which means a wisp of straw fix'd to the gate of a seized estate, together with the King's, or the lord of the manor's arms. *Brandons* also is used for wisps of straw set up in the fields at harvest time, by way of notice that the owner reserves the leasing to himself. *Brandon* sometimes signifies a torch or flambeau, as *Brandon d'amour*; but more frequently a wisp of straw on fire; and this leads to the true sense of *les Brandons* in Thielman Kerver's little book, as will presently appear.

In Mr. Bonnet's curious and learned treatise, entitled "*Histoire de la Danse*," we find that two sorts of sacred dances have been in use in the church, especially in France; the one called *Baladoirès*, the other *Brandons*. The *Baladoirès* had degenerated into so monstrous a licentiousness, even in the early ages of Christianity, that the very pagans were scandalized at them, the fathers of the Church attempted the abolition of them with all their might, and the canons

condemned them. Both men and women, like the Adamites of Amsterdam, practised them with the most lascivious gestures. New-year's day and the first of May were the times of those strange solemnities. Pope Zachary, in 744, published a decree for suppressing them, and all others that went under the title of sacred dances; and there are several ordonnances of the Kings of France, which forbid them, as tending to the total corruption of manners.

The *Brandons* were celebrated in many cities in France the first Sunday of Lent, round bonfires of straw, whence they had their name. They are now utterly abolished, with the rest, by royal authority, but were for a long time so rooted in the fancies of the people, all over the kingdom, that the bishops and magistrates strove to extirpate them in vain. At the feast of St. Martial, apostle of the Limousin, the congregation retained the custom of dancing in the choirs as lately as the middle of the last century; and instead of the doxology after every psalm, they sang out in that country dialect, *San Marceau pregrats per nous, et nous epingaren per bous*. St. Martial pray for us, and we will dance for you.

Yours, etc., J. B.

Whirlin Sunday (Fifth in Lent).

[1789, *Part I.*, p. 491.]

At several villages in the vicinity of Wisbech, in the isle of Ely, the fifth Sunday in Lent has been, time immemorial, commemorated by the name of Whirlin Sunday, when cakes are made by almost every family, and from the day are called whirlin cakes; but notwithstanding my frequent enquiries, I have not been able to discover the reason of this festival, which, I believe, obtains in no other place in the kingdom, and should be happy if any of your correspondents could elucidate a matter grossly involved in obscurity.

I write whirlin as it sounds in my ear; consequently, not having seen it in any Glossary which I have had opportunity to consult, I am not responsible for the orthography of the word.

I was going to say that whirlin is probably a corruption of whirlwind, and that the observance of the Sunday is to perpetuate the remembrance of such a convulsion of Nature having happened in an unusual manner in the village above mentioned; but the supposition is forbidden by the inhabitants considering the day as a festival, as I have already taken notice.

M. H.

Simnel Sunday.

[1866, *Part I.*, pp. 534-536.]

This term is used in Bury, Lancashire, to denote the 'fourth Sunday in Lent'—Mid-Lent—called in other parts of the country and

West Riding of Yorkshire, "Mothering Fig-Pie," "Mulled Ale," and "Braggart Sunday." From time beyond memory, thousands of persons come from all parts to that town to eat "Simmels." Formerly, nearly every shop was open, with all the public-houses, quite in defiance of the law respecting the closing during "service;" but of late years, through the improved state of public opinion, the disorderly scenes to which the custom gave rise have been partially amended. Efforts have been repeatedly made to put a stop to the practice altogether, but in vain. The clergy, headed by the rector and the ministers of all denominations (save the Romanists), have drawn up protests and printed appeals against this desecration; but, as just stated, with scarcely any visible effect. Possibly, too, the unfavourable weather for several successive seasons, and the great facility now afforded of obtaining "Real Bury Simmels," which are to be found on sale in every town in the Palatinæ and connected districts, have been the means whereby this observance has been weakened. On a fine "Sunday," it is a mild expression to say that one could easily walk upon the heads of the crowds for several streets.

The bread called "Simmell bread," is mentioned by Jehoshaphat Aspin in his "Pictures of Manners, etc., in England" (now a very scarce work [see note 8]), page 126, quoting a statute of 51st of Hen. iii. :—"A *farthing symnel* (a sort of small cake, twice baked, and also called a *cracknel*) should weigh two ounces less than the *wastel* (a kind of cake made with honey, or with meal and oil)."

Simmell bread is described in "The Book of Days," and in "Notes and Queries." [See note 9.]

Alderman Wilkinson, of Burnley, a well known able Lancashire antiquary, some time since stated that it "originally meant the very *finest* bread." "Pain demain" is another term for it, on account of its having been used as "Sunday bread" (if a conjecture may be hazarded, it is possible there may be some connection with the shew-bread and heathen votive offerings, as in India and China) at the Sacrament. The name appears in mediæval Latin as *Simanellus*, and may thus have been derived from the Latin *simila*—fine flour. In Wright's "Vocabularies" [see note 10] it appears thus: "Hic *artæcopus* = *symnelle*." This form was in use during the 15th century. In the "Dictionatius" of John de Garlande, compiled at Paris in the 13th century [see note 11], it appears thus: "*Simeneus* = *placentæ* = *simmels*." Such cakes were stamped with the figure of Christ, or of the Virgin."

It is not a little singular that this custom of making these cakes, and also the practice of assembling in one place to eat them, should be confined to Bury. Such is the fact. No other town or district in the United Kingdom is known to keep up such a custom. As stated above, much labour has been expended to trace its origin, but without success. Some years ago a sort of Eclectic Society in that town, who

used to hold meetings on Sunday evenings, gave notice that they would discuss this question on the coming Mid-Lent Sunday evening. They met in an old room just out of one of the principal streets, and the chair was taken by a master-hatter, who afterwards became a Baptist preacher. Much laughter was caused by his explanation respecting the origin of the term "simnel," which, he said, he had heard arose from this circumstance: "In an old part of the town called 'the Island' (a plot of land nearly isolated from the Irwell), there formerly resided an old couple who kept a small 'toffy-shop,' which was famous amongst the schoolboys, etc., for a peculiar, and to them, excellent kind of sweet cake. The names of this old couple were Simeon and Ellen; but, according to common Lancashire parlance, they were usually addressed as 'Sim' and 'Nell,' and thus the cake came to be called 'Sim and Nell's cake,' easily corrupted to 'simnel cake'!" This, however, did not explain the practice of eating the cake during Mid-Lent only. It may be added that the Monday following is often accounted a holiday, and that the word "simnel" is vulgarly pronounced "simblin."

Upon the marriage of the Prince of Wales, the ladies of Bury made a very large and excellent simnel cake, which they presented to their Royal Highnesses; it was exhibited amongst the rest of the "People's Gifts," and their Royal Highnesses graciously acknowledged it. The late M.P. for the borough, the Right Hon. F. Peel, always received annually a very nice simnel cake, made by sympathising hands. The confectioners of Bury vie with each other as to the size and richness of these cakes; but they must yield the palm in the former particular, at least, to one just made at Bolton-le-Moors, Lancashire, as shown by the following extract from the "Bolton Chronicle" of March 10, 1866:

"A Monster Simnel.—The display of simnel cakes in the various confectionery establishments in the town this week has scarcely, perhaps as regards size and beauty of design, ever been equalled on any previous occasion. A monster simnel, exhibited in the shop window of Mr. Henderson (late Mrs. Chatterton's), in the Market Square, has attracted great attention. It is 5 ft. 10 in. in length, 2 ft. 10 in. wide, 15 ft. in circumference, 6 in. in thickness, and weighs nearly 450 lb. On its surface is a representation of 'David slaying Goliath.' The shop window of Mr. Hamer (late Miss Bell's), in Bradshawgate, also contains an elegantly designed simnel, weighing about 250 lb., which was made in four pieces. Yesterday afternoon John Hick, Esq., and his lady, while at Mr. Hamer's shop, purchased a number of simnels, which, with considerate generosity, they distributed from their carriage, to about a dozen juveniles, who were congregated about the shop, admiring the large simnel in the window. Mr. Rigby, of Market Street, and Messrs. Burgess & Co., Deansgate, also exhibit an attractive variety."

Commending the question of the derivation of the term to your reader's consideration,

I am, etc.,

W. M. BROOKES.
St. James' Schools, Accrington.

[1866, *Part I.*, p. 692.]

I was rather surprised at the statement of your correspondent Mr. W. M. Brookes, in your last, that the eating of simnel cakes is confined to Bury, in Lancashire, and that "no other town or district in the United Kingdom is known to keep up such a custom." It shows the value of such a medium of communication as that offered by the "correspondence of Sylvanus Urban." I imagined, on the contrary, that this custom was peculiar to the counties on the Welsh border; at all events, these simnel cakes are well known in Shropshire and Herefordshire, and the good old town of Shrewsbury is especially celebrated for them. If he will look to a book so ready for reference as Chambers's "Book of Days," vol. i., p. 336, your correspondent will find an article on the Shropshire simnel cakes, in which he will find some additional information.

THOMAS WRIGHT, F.S.A.
Brompton, April 21, 1866.

[1866, *Part I.*, p. 848.]

Mr. T. Wright's kindly wish to direct me aright (in your last Number, p. 692), has led him into error too, as he understands me to mean that simnels are not made elsewhere than in the town of Bury. This was not my meaning. I wished to state distinctly that the practice of assembling in one town, upon one day—the middle Sunday in Lent—to eat these cakes, is a practice confined to Bury. This I assert to be correct. I may add that the "Shrewsbury cakes" are really "Ellesmere simnels." I am quite aware of "Eccles Feast" and the "Wake Sundays" and other "Sunday festivities," etc., but these are not "simnel observances," nor are they during Lent.

I am, etc., W. M. BROOKES.
St. James' Schools, Accrington.

March.—Mothering Sunday.

[1784, *Part I.*, pp. 96-98.]

As a correspondent of yours, vol. liii., p. 578, is desirous amongst other customs of knowing the original of regaling on *furmety* on what he calls "Mothering Sunday," I have here sent you what has occurred to me towards tracing it out. As to "Mothering Sunday," of which another correspondent, p. 928, confesses his ignorance, and which, indeed, I never heard of before, this, I suppose, may be some Sunday near Christmas, and has reference to the winter solstice, the night of which was called by our ancestors Mother-Night, as they reckoned the beginning of their years from thence. But, be this as it will, I know it is a custom in the northern counties to have *furmety*, or *frumety*, as the common people there call it, on Christmas-eve; however the word

be pronounced, it is probably derived from *frumentum*, wheat.* It is made of what is called in a certain town in Yorkshire "kreed wheat," or whole grains first boiled plump and soft, and then put into and boiled in milk, sweetened and spiced. One of the principal feasts among the northern nations was the *Juul*, afterwards called *Yule*, about the shortest day;† which, as Mr. Mallet observes, bore a great resemblance to the Roman Saturnalia. That this rejoicing on Christmas Eve had its rise from the *Juul*, and was exchanged for it, is evident from a custom practised in the northern nations more fully to answer this purpose, as on it they ended the old and began the new year. That this rejoicing on Christmas Eve had its rise from the *Juul*, and was exchanged for it, is evident from a custom practised in the northern nations, of putting a large clog of wood on the fire this evening, which is still called the Yule clog; the original occasion of it may have been, as the *Juul* was their greatest festival, to honour it with the best fire. About this, in the rude and simple ages after the change, the whole household, which was quite agreeable to the nature of the old feast, used to sit, stand, or play in a sportive manner, according to the proverb of those times, "All friends round the wrekin."

Now, what gave occasion to this exchange was this: in the degenerate ages, it was the usual method to convert these barbarians, by adapting the Christian religion, as much as possible, to their ancient usages and customs; and one most prevailing they took for doing it was, by promising them they should be indulged with the same or like feasts in it as what they enjoyed before in Paganism. Hence, for the *Juul*, they gave them to understand they should enjoy the feast of Christmas, and indulged them with this part of their feast on its eve, which they might think innocent, and would not break in much upon this festival, and agreed with their ancient manner of beginning theirs. However, from that strong attachment the multitudes always have for their ancient customs, many of them for some time afterwards called Christmas Yule; and this seems to have prevailed the longest in the northern countries. In the same manner as the feast of our Lord's Resurrection was substituted for another festival they held in the spring or Easter month, as April was then called, from the easterly winds which prevail at this time, it is called Easter amongst us to this day. But, by the bye, I think it high time this old denomination was laid aside, and the true one restored. It would be much the best to have all our Christian festivals called by their most true, simple, and expressive names, that people of all ranks might hence be more strongly reminded of what great, glorious, and interesting events they are intended to recall into their minds, and so be excited to think more

* On this head let the curious reader consult "The Furmetary," a delectable poem of the facetious Dr. King.—*Scriblerus*. [See note 12.]

† "Northern Antiquities," vol. i., p. 130.

seriously about them, and take comfort from them. We have another instance of this impropriety in Acts xii. 4, where our translators have put Easter for the Passover.

J. M.

Scrutator observes that "Mothering Sunday" is explained in Bailey's dictionary, 8vo., where it is said that "Mothering is a custom still retained in many places of England of visiting parents on Mid-Lent Sunday; and it seems to be called *mothering* from the respect in old time paid to the *mother*-church, it being the custom for people in popish times to visit their *mother*-church on Mid-Lent Sunday, and to make their offerings at the high altar."

A Nottinghamshire correspondent tells us that, when he was a schoolboy, the practice on Christmas Eve was to roast apples on a string till they dropped into a large bowl of spiced ale, which is the whole composition of "Lamb's-wool," and that whilst he was an apprentice, the custom was to visit his mother on *Mid-Lent Sunday* (thence called *Mothering Sunday*) for a regale of excellent furnety. [See *post*, p. 45.]

N.

March 3rd.—St. Winnal.

[1832, *Part II.*, p. 98.]

L. S. suggests, in reference to *St. Winnal*, that that name might be a contraction, or corruption rather, of *St. Winwaloe*, who was a British Saint, and flourished about 555, an abbot of great sanctity. There was a priory dedicated to this saint at Wereham in Norfolk. His day was the third of March. This being generally a cold season of the year, the storms at this time are called in Norfolk to this day, "*Whinwall* storms," and the old rhyme following, we are informed by Norfolk historians, becomes frequently quoted:

"First comes David, next comes Chad,
Then comes *Whinwall* as if he was mad."

Sunday Fortnight before Easter—Carling Sunday.

[1786, *Part I.*, p. 410.]

In your Magazine for last October your correspondent H. D. takes notice of a new appellation for the Sunday fortnight before Easter, viz., *Careing Sunday*.

In Northumberland, that day is called Carling Sunday. The yeomanry in general steep peas, and afterwards parch them, and eat them on the afternoon of that day, calling them Carlings. This is said, by an old author, to have taken its rise from the disciples plucking the ears of corn and rubbing them in their hands. Also Palm Sunday is said, by the same author, to have taken its name from the

branches of palm trees strewed in the way as our Saviour entered Jerusalem. Branches of that tree are frequently worn as nosegays on that Sunday, when it falls so late in the year that the trees are in flower.

In the said county is used the following couplet on the six last names of Sundays in Lent :

“Tid, mid, miseray,
Carling, palm, and good-paste day.”

Of the first three names I have nowhere met any explanation. The last are explained above, except good-paste day, which seems borrowed from the Jewish rites of the Passover.

PHILO-BOTANICUS.

[1788, *Part I.*, pp. 188, 189.]

I have long threatened to trouble you with some of my grandmother's saws, for what we catch in our youth we rarely lose. At the distance of nearly half a century the tag of many a monkish rhyme still rings in my ears.

Born and educated in a northern county of England, and therefore remote from the capital, their sayings and their customs, which still savour much of Popish superstition, are not to be wondered at.

In a former volume of this valuable work* you make mention of the Sunday fortnight before Easter being in Nottinghamshire called *Careing Sunday* :

“Careing Sunday, care away ;
Palm Sunday and Easter-day.”

We have in Northumberland the following couplet, which gives name to every Sunday in Lent except the first :

“Tid, and Mid, and Misera,
Carling, Palm, and Good-pas day.”

What the three first mean, or whether they mean anything, some of your correspondents may inform us.

Pas-day is obviously an abbreviation of *Pasque*, the old French spelling for *Easter*. *Pas-eggs* are still, I am told, sent as presents for young folks in the Easter holidays. They are merely the eggs of our domestic fowl boiled, and tinged of various hues, by adding to the water, when boiling, logwood, rose leaves, the yellow blossoms of the whin, or furze, or other dyes, and are written on, figured, or ornamented, by an oiled pencil, or any greasy matter, drawn lightly over the shell before they are boiled, according to the boyish taste of the artist. A pecuniary present at this season has the same name given to it.

Of the more social customs still kept up in this county is this of the

* Vol. ix., p. 779 ; lvi., p. 410. [See note 13.]

Sunday fortnight before Easter, feasting together on Carlings,* which are choice grey pease of the preceding autumn, steeped in spring water for 12 or 15 hours, till they are soaked or macerated, then laid on a sieve in the open air that they may be externally dry. Thus swelled, and enlarged to a considerable size, and on the verge of vegetating, they are put in an iron pot, or otherwise, on a slow fire, and kept stirring. They will then parch, crack, and, as we provincially call it, bristle; when they begin to burst they are ready to eat.

On this memorable Sunday the Carlings are everywhere regularly introduced, among the genteeler sort, after dinner, *faire la bonne bouche* to a glass of wine, as we would here a napkin of roasted chestnuts, to which they are no bad substitute, being in taste not exceedingly unlike them. While the honest peasant resorts to the best home-brewed, and there freely quaffs his *Carling-groat* in honour of the festival.

[1758, *Part I.*, p. 288.]

In answer to your correspondent (p. 188) who desires an explanation of

“Tid, and Mid, and Misera,
Carling, Palm, and Good-pas day.”

Tide and *tite* are words in common use in the North of England signifying soon or quickly; and *tider*, or *tittes*,† sooner or nearer. “The tider you come, the tider you’ll go” (proverb) probably a corruption of *the hither*. *Tid*, then, in this instance means the first Sunday in the first line; *mid*, the middle of the first three; of *misera* I can only suppose it to be the first word in some office appropriated to that day in the missal. Grey pease are called *Carlings* in some counties; but whether the pease were denominated after the festival, or the festival after the pease, remains to be proved. *Carling*, or *Careing*, may be derived from careful preserving and preparing the best pease for the purpose; or perhaps, *Charing*, or *Charling*, from parching the pease like charcoal; or lastly, if (as is asserted) this feast was instituted to commemorate the plucking of ears of corn by the disciples, might it not be *Earing* Sunday? an *e* and a *c* when

* I have endeavoured to find the etymology of the word *Carling* to little effect; it can have nothing to do with the Carle, Carleing, or *rude-churle* of Minshen.

† When I was on a visit in Yorkshire I found the family one morning employed in securing a swarm of bees, which had fixed on a high tree in the garden. A poor neighbour came in to assist, and the first words she spoke I write exactly as she pronounced them: “Ya sed a rute doon t’ bewfs titter, and tok ’em i’ t’ eeve.” It is impossible, however, to describe on paper her accent, or the rapidity of her utterance, which rendered it still more unintelligible. “Does this woman speak English?” whispered I to my friend. “Yes,” said he; “and her words are, ‘You should have cut down the boughs *titter* (sooner) and taken them into the hive.’”

written, being very frequently not distinguishable, and many mistakes have doubtless thus originated and continued undetected. *Palm* requires no explanation; and *Good-pas day* is obviously either an abbreviation of *Pasque*, *Paschal*, or *Passover*.

Vails (as it is commonly pronounced) I conceive to have been originally the Latin *vale*, as it is applied to farewell gifts to servants.

R. P.

March 16th.—Windy Saturday.

[1829, pp. 24, 25]

Windy Saturday is one of the popular epochs which is frequently mentioned by natives of Scotland, and yet it is remarkable how very few of them have the least idea when that notable day occurred, or of any of the circumstances attending it. I made inquiry of at least fifty persons, before I got the slightest information, except occasionally something about unroofing houses, which seemed to be rather the result of imagination than of any precise tradition on the subject. At last an old woman informed me, that "it was a dreadful day of wind lang syne, which blew down one of the Kings of Scotland and killed him." This was all she had ever heard, and it pointed immediately to the circumstances of the death of King Alexander III., who was killed by falling over the cliff between Burnt Island and Kinghorn on the north side of the Firth of Forth.

By referring to the annals of that period, it will be seen that this unfortunate event occurred on the 16th day of March, 1286, or (to embrace both the ecclesiastical and civil year) 1285-6, which day will be found to have been a Saturday.

It does not appear, however, that there was any unusual storm of wind on that day, and the King is said by some to have lost his way during a fall of snow in the dusk of the evening, and to have fallen down; and not to have been blown down the cliff by violence.

The popular belief of its having been a Windy Saturday, probably arises from the following story of a prophecy of the celebrated Thomas the Rhymer, whose fame remains undiminished to the present day, and which story is thus related in the ancient translation of Hector Boethius, by Bellenden:

"It is said, the day afore the Kingis deith the Erle of Marche demandit ane prophet namit Thomas Rymour, otherwayis namit Ersiltoun, quhat weder suld be on the morow? To quhome answerit this thomas, that on the morow afore noon sall blow the gretist wynd that evir was hard afore in Scotland. On the morow quhen it was neir noon, the lift (sky) appering loune (cloudy) bot any din or tempest the Erle send for this prophet, and reprovit him, that he prognosticat sic wynd to be, and nane appearance thairof. This Thomas maid litel answer, bot said, noon is not gane. And incontenent ane man came to the yet (gate), schawing the King was slane. Than said the prophet, yone is the wynd that shall blane to the gret calamity and truble of al Scotland."

Critics who are sceptical in regard to the prophetic powers so liberally ascribed to the Rhymer to this day by the vulgar, remark,

respecting this story, that he had probably foretold that there would be a windy day, and as no wind actually occurred, he afterwards availed himself of the circumstance of the King's death to save his credit as a prophet. The above story also represents the fatal event to have taken place about mid-day; whereas other annalists state it to have been in the dusk of the evening.

The circumstances of the death of King Alexander were in themselves sufficient to make a strong popular impression, and the more so, as it was believed by some to be a divine judgment, because he was going to visit his wife in the season of Lent, in opposition to the rules prescribed by the Church. And as the death of his infant daughter occurred soon after, and gave occasion to the contest for the Crown between the factions of Bruce and Baliol, and the desperate struggle for the independence of the country against the invasion of the English, the death of Alexander might very justly be said, in a metaphorical sense, to be a wind that blew great calamity and trouble to all Scotland.

Here, then, we have Windy Saturday explained in a metaphorical sense, as connected with one of the most unfortunate events in the history of the country, but without any physical commotion of the air.

Perhaps some of your Correspondents will be so good as to inform you, if he knows of any other Saturday which can lay claim to the celebrity of the day in question.

I should also feel obliged if any of your Correspondents would explain when Black Monday, or *Mirk Monday*, as it is called, took place; and whether the designation took its rise from a total eclipse of the Sun, or any actual physical darkness; or whether it was so called on account of any national calamity. The epoch of *Mirk Monday* is very often heard, and not unfrequently occurs in writings; but after numerous inquiries, I have been unable to get the slightest idea when it occurred, either from learned antiquaries or old women. Was it the day on which the Earl of Moray, popularly known by the appellation of the Good Regent, was assassinated? That event took place on *Monday*, 23 January, 1570.

J. M.

Maunday Thursday.

[1732, p. 720.]

Being *Maunday Thursday*, Dr. Gilbert sub-almoner, wash'd the feet, and distributed alms to 49 (the king's years) poor people of both sexes. See the Ceremony, *Gent. Mag.*, vol. i., p. 172. [See note 14.]

[1781, p. 500.]

In addition to what has been mentioned by your correspondents concerning *Maunday Thursday*, you will please to inform them that

it is a general practice of people of all ranks in the Roman Catholic countries to dress in their very best cloaths on that day. The churches are unusually adorned, and everybody performs what is called the *Stations*; which is, to visit several churches, saying a short prayer in each, and giving alms to the numerous beggars who attend upon the occasion.

M. H.

[1779, *pp.* 290, 291.]

Your correspondent Cantianus, in the last month's Magazine, p. 190, wishes to be informed "why Maunday Thursday is in Collier's Ecclesiastical History called Shier Thursday." If Mr. Row, whom he addresses, or some other learned antiquary, has not already answered this query, with the others there proposed, the following passages will probably be acceptable; the first of which ascertains the day, and the other gives the reason of the appellation. They point out also the true orthography of the word; to which point our early writers were not very attentive. They are transcribed from the Festival (fol. xxx., p. 2, and fol. xxxi.), printed by Wynkyn de Worde, 1511; in which are many very curious legends of popish superstition. The chapter whence these extracts are made contains answers to "diverse questyons, which be nedeful for every Preest to knowe."

"Yf a man aske why Shere Thursdaye is called so, ye may saye that in holy church it is called (*Cena Domini*) our Lordes Souper Daye; for that day he souped with his Discyple openly, and after souper he gave them his flesshe and his blode to eat and drynke." "It is also in Englysshe called Sher-Thursdaye, for in old fader's dayes the people wolde that daye *shere* theyr heedes, and clyppe theyr berdes, and poll theyr heedes, and so make them honest ayenst Eester Day."

I am, etc., R. C.

Good Friday.

HOT CROSS BUNS.

[1809, *Part I.*, p. 316.]

Yesterday being Good Friday, the antient dames of this place were especially careful to lay up a sufficient stock of *Cross Buns* (which will keep without growing mouldy!), as a panacea for all disorders during the succeeding twelve-month.

This superstition is evidently the relic of a Roman Catholic practice, founded on the doctrine of Transubstantiation; though the practice (and with it the doctrine itself) was reprobated by the Church in the time of our Saxon ancestors, nearly 800 years ago. "Here followeth the wordes of Ælfricke, Abbot of S. Albones, and also of Malmesberye, taken out of his Epistle written to Wulfine, Byshop of Scyrburne*: 'Some Pristes keepe the Housell (*i.e.*, the Sacramental

* I need not trouble you to print the original Saxon.

Water) that is hallowed on Easter Day, *all the yere for syke men*. But they doe greatye amyse, by cause it waxeth *horye*. That Housell is Christe's bodye, *not bodylye, but ghostlye*." (A Testimonie of Antiquitie; shewing the auncient Fayth in the Church of England, 1567, p. 63.)

Ælfrick also uses similar language in an Epistle to Wulfstan, Archbishop of York (*ut sup.* p. 66).

The following story (given, with another nearly as wonderful, by Butler in his "Feminin' Monarchi," 1634, p. 18, from Bozius, de Signis Ecclesiæ, lib. xiv., c. 3) will shew to what an extent the belief of a real presence has been carried; and that the architectural skill of bees is not confined to their waxen cells, but has displayed itself in the erection of a complete religious edifice!

"Cum mulier quædam simplicis ingenij nonnulla apum alvearia possideret, neq. illæ redderent expetitur fructum, sed lue quædam tabescentes morerentur; de consilio alterius fœminæ simplicioris, accessit ad Sacerdotem perceptura Eucharistiam: quam sumptam tamen ore continuit, domumq. reversa extractam collocavit in uno ex alvearijs. Lues cessavit: mella affluebant. Itaq. suo tempore mulier, apertis, ut mel educeret, alvearijs, vidit (miranda res!) ex-ædificatum ab apibus sacellum, constructum altare, parietes miro Architecturæ artificio suis fenestris appositè suis locis ornatos, ostium, turrim, *cum suis tintinabulis*: Eucharistiam verò in altari repositam, circumvolabant suavi suspirio perstreperantes apes."

WILLIAM HAMPER.

[1816, Part II., pp. 502, 503.]

Mr. Bryant, in his Antient Mythology, vol. i, p. 371, informs us that the offerings which people in antient times used to present to the Gods, were generally purchased at the entrance of the Temple, especially every piece of consecrated bread, which was denominated accordingly. Those sacred to the God of light, *Peon*, were called *Piones*, etc., etc., etc. One species of sacred bread, which used to be offered to the Gods, was of great antiquity, and called *Boun*. Hesychius speaks of the *Boun*, and describes it as *a kind of cake with a representation of two horns*. Diogenes Laertius, speaking of the same offering, describes the chief ingredients of which it was composed. "He offered one of the sacred cakes called a *Boun*, which was made of fine flour and honey."—The Prophet Jeremiah takes notice of this kind of offering when he is speaking of the Jewish women at Pathros in Egypt, and of their base idolatry. "When we burnt incense to the Queen of Heaven, and poured out drink-offerings to her, did we make *cakes* to worship her," Jer. xlv. The Prophet in another place takes notice of the same idolatry: "The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough to make cakes to the Queen of Heaven," Jer. vii.

Can there be any doubt that the English word *Bun* is derived from the cake *Boun*; and that the Cross-bun, which is baked on Good

Friday, was a substitute for the cakes used in the worship of idols, in the same manner as many of our Christian Festivals were adopted instead of Heathen *Ferix* or Holy Days? Perhaps, Mr. Urban, I am only stating what might to Antiquaries have been known before; but Mr. Bryant himself does not make the remark which appears so obviously to have presented itself; and Dr. Johnson, in his Dictionary, seems to have had no conception of the kind, as he derives *Bun* from the Spanish word *Bunelo*.—I have been very concise in the extract from Bryant; and therefore refer the Reader, if he wishes to see a fuller account of these CAKES, or Bouns, to his work, vol. i., p. 371. The etymology of the word, and the curious custom of marking the symbol of our faith in opposition to idolatrous symbols, mutually confirm my conjecture.

I take this opportunity of remarking another curious coincidence, which lay at the feet of Mr. Bryant, though he did not see it, or perhaps would not condescend to pick it up. See vol. i., p. 59.

Mr. B. tells us that the symbolical worship of the Serpent was of the most remote antiquity, and very extensive, and that the Greek *Python* is the same as *Opis*, *Oupis*, *Oub*, and *Ob*. The woman at Endor who had a familiar spirit is called *Oub* or *Ob*; and it is interpreted *Pythonissa*. This idolatry is also alluded to by Moses (Deut. xviii. 11), who forbids the Israelites ever to inquire of those demons *Ob* and *Idcone*, whose worshippers are called charmers, consultants with evil spirits, or wizards, or necromancers.—The curious coincidence which I mean to remark is, that the witchcraft practised by the Blacks in the West Indies at this day is called *Ob*, or *Obi*; the ignorant Negroes are under the most superstitious dread of those who profess the art.

“*Obi*, or Three-fingered Jack,” is the title of a Dramatic Piece founded on the above circumstance.

Yours, etc., C. V. L. G.

CRAMP RINGS.

[1774, p. 247.]

“The nrdre of the Kinge on Good-Friday touchinge the cominge to service, hallowinge of the Crampe Rings, and offering and Creeping to the Crosse.

(From a MS. belonging to the late Mr. Anstis, now to the Duke of Northumberland.)

“Firste, the Kinge to come to the chappell or closet, withe the Lords and Noblemen waytinge upon him, without anv sword borne before hime as that day, and ther to tarrie in his travers until the Byshope and the Deane have brought in the crucifixe out of the vestrie, and layd it upon the cushion before the highe Alter. And then the Usher to lay a Carpet for the Kinge to creepe to the crosse upon: and that done, ther shall be a forme sett upon the carpett before the crucifix, and a cushion laid upon it for the Kinge to kneale upon. And the Master of the Jewell house ther to be ready with the crampe rings in a bason of silver, and the

Kinge to kneele upon the cushion before the forme. And then the Clerke of the Clossett be redie with the booke concerninge the halowinge of the crampe rings, and the Aumer muste kneele on the right hand of the Kinge, holdinge the sayd booke. When that is done, the Kinge shall rise and go to the Alter, wheare a Gent. Usher shall be redie with a cushion for the Kinge to kneale upon; and then the greatest Lords that shall be ther, to take the bason with the rings, and beare them after the King to offer. And thus done, the Queene shall come downe out of her closset or traverse into the chappell, with ladyes and gentlewomen waitinge upon her, and creepe to the crosse, and then goe agayne to her clossett or traverse. And then the ladyes to creepe to the crosse likewise, and the Lords and Noblemen likewise."

Dr. Percy, who has printed this curious extract at the end of his notes on Northumberland Household-book, observes that our ancient Kings, even in the dark times of superstition, do not seem to have affected to cure the King's Evil; at least, this MS. gives no hint of any such power. This miraculous gift was left to be claimed by the Stuarts; our *antient* Plantagenets were humbly content to cure the cramp. The Doctor adds that, in 1536, when the Convocation under Henry VIII. abolished some of the old superstitious practices, this of creeping to the cross on Good Friday, etc., was ordered to be retained as a laudable and edifying custom. See Herbert's "Life of Henry VIII." It appears in Northumberland Household-book to have been observed in the Earl's family, the value of the offerings then made by himself, his lady, and his sons, being there severally ascertained.

There is also specified a candle to be offered by each of the above persons on St. Blays-day; on which the learned editor observes that "the anniversary of St. Blasius is the 3rd of February, when it is still the custom, in many parts of England, to light up fires on the hills on St. Blaise night, a custom antiently taken up, perhaps for no better reason than the jingling resemblance of his name to the word 'Blaze.'"

D. H.

[1834, *Part I.*, pp. 48-50.]

"The order of the King on Good Friday, touching his coming to service, hallowing of the Cramp Rings, and offering and creeping to the crosse.

"First the King to come to the closett, or to the chappell, with the Lords and noblemen wayting on him, without any sword to bee borne before him on that day and there to tarry in his travers till the Bishop and Deane have brought forth the crucifix out of the vestry (the Almoner reading the service of the cramp rings) layd upon a cushion before the high altar, and then the buishers shall lay a carpet before yt for the King to creep to the crosse upon, and yt done there shall be a fourme set upon the carpet before the crucifix, and a cushion layd before it for the King to kneele on; and the master of the jewell house shal be thcr ready with the cramp rings in a basin or basins of silver; the King shall kneele upon the sayd cushion before the fourme and then must the Clerk of the closett bee ready with the booke conteyninge ye service of the hallowing of the sayd rings, and the Almoner must kneel upon the right hand of the King, holding of the sayd

booke, and when yt is done the King shall rise and go to the high altar, where an huisher must be ready with a cushion to lay for his grace to kneele upon, and the greatest Lord or Lords being then present shall take the basin or basins with the rings, and bear them after the King, and then deliver them to the King to offer; and this done the Queen shall come down out of her closett or travers into the Chappell, with ladies and gentlewomen wayters on her, and creepe to the crosse; and that done, she shall returne againe into her closett or travers, and then the ladies shall come downe and creepe to the crosse, and when they have done, the Lords and noblemen shall in likewise."

The custom which prevailed in England during the middle ages of hallowing Rings upon Easter Day and Good Friday, which rings, in consequence of the benediction thus bestowed, were supposed to possess the power of securing the wearer from the falling sickness and cramp, has already received illustration from Brand and Ellis. Some few interesting particulars having presented themselves in addition to the facts collected by those learned writers, they are here presented to the reader.

We learn from Hospinian, as cited by Brand, that the Kings of England had a custom of hallowing rings upon Good Friday, and that the custom originated in a ring which was long preserved with especial veneration in Westminster Abbey, supposed to have been brought from Jerusalem by some pilgrims, and which ring, it was discovered, Edward the Confessor had given to a mendicant who had solicited charity in the name of St. John the Evangelist.*

Polydore Vergil repeats the same story of the ring given to the mendicant at Jerusalem, and adds:

"Iste annulus in eodem templo (scil. Westmonasterii), multa veneratione perdiu est servatus, quod salutaris esset membris stupentibus valeretque adversus comitalem morbum, cum langeretur ab illis, qui ejusmodi tentarentur morbis. Hinc natum, ut reges postea Angliæ consueverint in die Paraceues, multa coërimonia sacrare anulos, quos qui induunt, hisce in morbis omnino nunquam sunt."—p. 143, edit. 1546.

More explicit and authentic information regarding the manner in which this offering was made, is to be collected from the Wardrobe Accounts of Edward III., a manuscript in the Cottonian Library. Amongst the alms with which the royal household is debited are the following entries:

"Anno ix. In oblationibus Domini Regis ad crucem de Gneyth† die Paraceues in capella sua infra manerium de Clipstone, in precio duorum Florencium xiiij. die Aprilis vjs. viij*d*. et in denariis quos posuit pro dictis Florenciis reasumptis pro anulis inde faciendis ibidem eodem die vjs. Summa xijs. viij*d*.‡

"Anno x. In oblationibus Domini Regis ad crucem de Gneythe die Paraceues in capella sua apud Eltham xxix. die Marci vs. et pro eisdem denariis reasumptis pro anulis inde faciendis per manus Domini Johannis de Crokeford eodem die v. Summa xs."§

* Brand's Popular Antiq., edit. Ellis, i. 128.

† For an account of the Black Cross of Gneyeth see the Glossary affixed to the Wardrobe Account of Edward I., edited by Topham.

‡ MS. Cott. Nero, c. viii. fol. 209.

§ Id. fol. 212.

From these two entries it appears that certain coins were offered at the High Altar, that they were afterwards redeemed by an equivalent sum being substituted, and that the money so consecrated was converted into rings. It is true that these entries do not state explicitly for what purpose these rings were to be made, or why they were formed from consecrated metal, but the fact already advanced by Hospinian prevents us from doubting the object to which they were applied. Two circumstances in these entries are rather singular; in the first place, the offering made is a trifling one, and in the second place, we see that the consecrated coin was redeemed in one instance by a ransom which was not equivalent in intrinsic value to the money originally offered.

Cramp Rings must, therefore, have been very scarce articles if they were formed by no more easy process than that here described. Our ancestors were too fond of charms to tolerate such a monopoly, and rings, possessing equal efficacy against cramps with those mentioned above, were manufactured in no small numbers. This is proved beyond a doubt by the following extract from a medical treatise written in the 14th century. It is the *medicine* against the Cramp, and is given as it stands in the original.

"For the Crampe. Tak and ger gedir* on Gude Friday, at fyfe parische kirkes, fife of the first penyes that is offerd at the crosse, of ilk a kirk the first penye; than tak them al and ga befor the crosse and say v. pater nosters in the worschip of fife wondes,† and bere thaim on the v. dais, and say ilk a day als mekil on the same wyse; and then gar mak‡ a ryng thar of with owten alay of other metel, and writ with in Jasper, Batasar, Altrapa,§ and writ with outen Ih'c nazareus; and sithen tak it fra the goldsmyth upon a Fridai, and say v. pater nosters als thu did be fore and vse it alway afterward."||

Some of the rings formed according to these instructions may still be in existence; and, perhaps, the passage quoted may be the means of explaining what has hitherto been misunderstood, or identifying the use of what has been uncertain.

Lord Berners, the translator of Froissart, when at the Court of the Emperor Charles V. as ambassadour from Henry VIII., in a letter dated 21 June, 1518, says to Wolsey, "If your grace remember me with some crampe-rynges ye shall do a thing much looked for, and I trust to bestow thaym well, with Godd's grace."¶

A letter from Dr. Magnus to Cardinal Wolsey, written in 1526, contains the following curious passage:

"Pleas it your Grace to wete that M. Wiat of his goodnes sent vnto me for a present certaine Cramp Ringes which I distributed and gave to sonderly myne

* Cause to be gathered.

† The five wounds which our Saviour had when crucified.

‡ Cause to be made.

§ These are blundered forms of the names of the three Kings of Cologne.

|| MS. Arundel 275, fol. 23^b.

¶ MS. Harl. 295, fol. 119^b; cited by Ellis, i. 128.

acquaintaunce at Edinburghe, amonges other to M. Adame Otterbourne, who, with oone of thayme, releved a mann lying in the falling sekenes, in the sight of myche people; sethenne whiche tyme many requestes have been made unto me for Cramp Ringges at my departing there, and also sethenne my comyng frome thennes. May it pleas your grace, therefore, to shew your gracious pleasure to the said M. Wyat that some Ringges may be kept and sent into Scottelande; whiche, after my poore oppynnyoun shulde be a good dede, remembering the power and operacion of thaym is knowne and proved in Edinburgh, and that they be gretly required for the same cause booth by grete persounages and other.”*

Andrew Boorde, in his “Breviary of Health,” speaking of the Cramp, has an allusion to the supposed power of the King to expel it. He says that “the Kynges Majestie hath a great helpe in this matter in hallowing Crampe Ringes, and so geven without money or petition.”†

[See note 15.]

J. STEVENSON.

Easter—Lifting.

[1784, *Part I.*, p. 96.]

Scrutator last vol., p. 928, wants an explanation of *lifting*. It was originally designed to represent our Saviour's resurrection. The men lift the women on Easter Monday, and the women the men on Tuesday. One or more take hold of each leg, and one or more of each arm, near the body, and lift the person up, in an horizontal position, three times. It is a rude, indecent, and dangerous diversion, practised chiefly by the lower order of people; our magistrates constantly prohibit it by the bellman, but it subsists at the end of the town, and the women have of late years converted it into a money job. I believe it is chiefly confined to these northern counties.

J. H. T.

Another correspondent says, “*Lifting* is done one day by the men to the women, and another day by the women to the men; I think on Easter Monday and Tuesday, in memory of the Resurrection. I speak from memory perhaps about Shrewsbury. Probably this is in Bourne or Brand, on the ‘Antiquities of the Common People,’ a book which, however, wants shortening and lengthening.”

Easter Eggs.

[1831, *Part II.*, p. 408.]

Few perhaps of your antiquarian readers are ignorant of the old practice on Easter Sunday, of presenting coloured Eggs, called *Pasche Eggs*, or *Paste Eggs*.† This custom, like most of those authorised by the Roman Church, is of considerable antiquity, but in England the usage seems at present to be confined to a very few spots in the northern

* MS. Cott. Calig. B. ii. fol. 112.

† Fol. 166, edit. 4to, 1557, cited by Brand, i. 128.

‡ See Brand's “Pop. Antiq.,” i. 142, ed. Ellis; and Hone's “Every Day Book.”

counties. At the commencement of the last century the usage appears to have arrived in Italy at its height, and some curious evidence on the subject is preserved in a MS. volume in the British Museum (MSS. Add. 5239), containing drawings of ecclesiastical ornaments used in ceremonials, etc., executed by Francesco Bartoli and others. At fol. 41, is a coloured representation of the interior and exterior of two of these Easter Eggs, which were presented on Easter Day, 1716, to the beautiful young Lady Manfroni by Signor Bernini, who soon after married her. A note is annexed, by which it appears that it was usual to saw the eggs open longitudinally with a very fine instrument made for that purpose, and to remove the whole of the yolk and white. The shell was then carefully cleaned and dried, and lined with gilt paper, adorned with figures of the saints in silk and gold. Two pair of coloured ribbons were afterwards attached to open and shut the egg (in the manner walnuts are made to open by the French women at present); and when finished, they were offered as a souvenir by gallants to their mistresses. But the eggs presented by Signor Bernini were of a superior description. They were painted on the outside with emblematic figures of hearts, initials, etc., and in the inside contained, on a blue and gold ground, four several portraits of the young lady to whom they were given, represented in various attitudes, and playing on different musical instruments. The eggs were then fastened together by crimson ribbons; and when opened, would cause a pretty surprise to the object of his addresses. In the same volume, p. 42, there are drawings of six of these eggs, painted in various colours, after the usage of Rome. A note says, "These on Easter day are carried to church to y^e parish priests, who bless them and sprinkle y^m w: holy water; on y^t day, at dinner, y^e cloth is adorned w: sweet herbs and flowers, and y^e first thing y^t is eat are these blessed eggs; w^e are chiefly painted by y^e nuns of Amelia, a small city about 30 miles from Rome: y^e common sort of these eggs are all of one colour, as yellow, blew, red, or purple, w^e are sold in y^e streets till Ascention day or Whitsuntide. Anno 1716."

Ω

April 1.

[1766, p. 186.]

It is a matter of some difficulty to account for the expression, "An April fool," and the strange custom so universally prevalent throughout this kingdom, of people's making fools of one another on the 1st April, by trying to impose on each other, and sending one another, upon that day, upon frivolous, ridiculous, and absurd errands. However, something I have to offer on the subject, and I shall here throw it out, if it were only to induce others to give us their sentiments.

The custom, no doubt, had an original, and one of a very general nature; and therefore one may reasonably hope that though one person may not be so happy as to investigate the meaning and occasion of it, yet another possibly may. But I am the more ready to attempt a solution of this difficulty, because I find Mr. Bourne, in his "*Antiquitates Vulgares*," has totally omitted it, though it fell so plainly within the compass of his design.

I observe first, Mr. Urban, that this custom and expression has no connection at all with the *Festum Hypodiaconorum*, *Festum Stultorum*, *Festum Fatuorum*, *Festum Innocentium*, etc., mentioned in Du Fresne, for these jocular festivals were kept at a very different time of the year.

Secondly, That I have found no traces, either of the name or of the custom in other countries, insomuch that it appears to me to be an indigenal custom of our own. I speak only as to myself in this, for others, perhaps, may have discovered it in other parts, though I have not.

Now thirdly, to account for it, the name undoubtedly arose from the custom, and this, I think, arose from hence. Our year formerly began, as to some purposes, and in some respects, on the 25th March, which was supposed to be the Incarnation of our Lord; and it is certain that the commencement of the new year, at whatever time that was supposed to be, was always esteemed an high festival, and that both amongst the antient Romans and with us. Now, sir, great festivals were usually attended with an *Octave* [see *ante*, p. 7], that is, they were wont to continue eight days, whereof the first and the last were the principal; and you will find that the first of April is the Octave of the 25th of March, and the close or ending, consequently, of that feast, which was both the festival of the Annunciation and of the commencement of the new year. From hence, as I take it, it became a day of extraordinary mirth and festivity, especially amongst the lower sort, who are apt to pervert and to make a bad use of institutions, which at first might be very laudable in themselves.

I am, sir, etc., T. Row.

May 1st.—All Saints' Day.

[1784, *Part I.*, p. 343.]

I shall trouble you with a few remarks on *Lamb's-wool*, in addition to those of your correspondents in the last number of your excellent Magazine. [See *ante*, p. 16.]

I have often met with it in Ireland, where it is a constant ingredient at a merry-making on Holy Eve, or the evening before All Saints' Day; and it is made there by bruising roasted apples and mixing them with ale, or sometimes with milk. Formerly, when the

superior ranks of people were not too refined for these periodical meetings of jollity, white wine was frequently substituted for ale. To Lamb's-wool, apples and nuts are added as a necessary part of the entertainment, and the young folks amuse themselves with burning nuts in pairs on the bar of the grate, or among the warm embers, to which they give their name and that of their lovers, or those of their friends who are supposed to have such attachments, and from the manner of their burning and duration of the flame, etc., draw such inferences respecting the constancy or strength of their passions as usually promote mirth and good-humour.

I happened to reside last year near Chepstow, in Monmouthshire ; and there for the first time heard of *Mothering Sunday*. My enquiries into the origin and meaning of it were fruitless ; but the practice thereabouts was for all servants and apprentices on Mid-lent Sunday to visit their parents, and make them a present of money, a trinket, or some nice eatable ; and they are all anxious not to fail in this custom. [See *ante*, p. 29.]

There is an ancient custom in some parts of South Wales, which is, I believe, peculiar to that country, and still practised at the marriages of servants, trades folks, and little farmers. It is called a *bidding*, and is of real use. For before the wedding, an entertainment is provided, to which all the friends of each party are *bid* or invited, and to which none fail to bring or send some contributions, from a cow or a calf down to half a crown or a shilling. Nor can this be called absolutely a present, because an account of each is kept, and if the young couple do well, it is expected that they should give as much at any future bidding of their generous guests. I have frequently known of £50 being thus collected ; and have heard of a bidding which produced even a hundred, to a couple who were much beloved by their neighbours, and thereby enabled to begin the world with comfort. [See *Gent. Mag. Library*, "Manners and Customs," p. 67.]

D. A. B.

[1784, *Part I.*, p. 428.]

To the letter of your correspondent D. A. B., April Magazine, p. 343, suffer me to add my testimony that Lamb's-wool (so called from the peculiar softness of the ingredients when mixed), is in constant use in Ireland on All-hallow Eve. It is composed of roasted apples bruised, and rendered fine by being forced through a sieve or search, and then well mixed with sugar and ale, or white wine ; but with milk I have not seen it.

A. M. T.

May 1st.**MAY DAY IN HOLMSDALE, SURREY.**[1828, *Part I.*, p. 291—293.]

This is the day of Nature's universal joy, when the sylvan deities dance upon the May-morn sunbeam, to the sweet music of the grove, and the gardens of the valley are clothed in a rich profusion of variegated blossoms. It is the festival of Love, where Harmony and Mirth present the gay garlands of Spring. There was a time when this annual festival—even within my remembrance—was a day of rural delight; and, in the age of rustic simplicity, our happy ancestors encircled the May-pole with hearts overflowing with boundless glee, and without the mean and repulsive distinctions of worldly rank to spoil the general enjoyment. "This was once," says a certain author, "the most delightful holiday in the year. The young used to get up early in the morning, and go out into the fields and woods, where they plucked flowers and flowering boughs, with which they returned triumphantly, singing, and adorned their houses and rooms. May holidays need no explanation—they are the natural burst of joy for the Spring season."

To speak of the lofty May-pole, and of its gay garlands, in their original splendour, we must retrace the progress of Time through a whole century; but I can testify that the ancient customs had not been entirely banished from Holmsdale (although it is only twenty miles from the refined Metropolis), when I first became a resident in that delightful scene. I well remember that the return of May-Day brought with it the loveliness of young cottage faces and the artless smiles of genuine simplicity. The delighted children paraded from house to house with fragrant garlands, eagerly vying with each other in the display of all the rich treasures of Spring; but even then had modern refinement levelled the May-pole, and forbidden the harmless enjoyment in which our more happy ancestors annually indulged. I am aware that the proud and the fastidious may

"Hear with a disdainful smile
The short and simple annals of the poor;"

and may therefore deride the idea of any complaint upon a subject apparently so unimportant. It will not, however, appear insignificant when we recollect that, in proportion as our ancient rural customs have been disregarded, the morals of the rustic people have become contaminated; and that the ties of simple friendship have thus ceased to exist among them, as they must have existed when the happy neighbours periodically met together, in harmony and good fellowship, upon Nature's carpet, and under the magnificent canopy of Heaven, to celebrate the various festivals of the passing year. In

the merry days of the May-pole, we may fairly presume, the young peasant found amusement without resorting to the Public House—and I will venture to state that punishment by transportation, for carrying a gun in the field of a neighbour, was totally unknown! What good, then, has been done by the discontinuance of the old customs, and what harm would arise from their observance?

[1822, *Part I.*, pp. 323-325.]

AN ACCOUNT OF THE CELEBRATION OF THE MAY-GAMES, AND THE
REASON OF THEIR SUPPRESSION.

It was usual, on the first of May, for all the citizens who were able, to divert themselves in the woods and meadows with May-games; diversions not confined to the lower class, but equally the entertainment of persons of the highest rank; a remarkable instance of which is inserted in Hall's Chronicle, under the year 1515, when that author observes that King Henry VIII. and Queen Catharine, accompanied by many lords and ladies, rode a *maying* from Greenwich to the high ground of Shooter's Hill, where, as they passed along, they saw a company of 200 tall yeomen, all clothed in green, with green hoods, and bows and arrows. One, who was their chieftain, was called Robin Hood, and desired the King and all his company to stay and see his men shoot; to which the King agreeing, he whistled, and all the two hundred discharged their arrows at once; which they repeated on his whistling again. Their arrows had something placed in the heads of them, that made them whistle as they flew, and altogether made a loud and very uncommon noise, at which the King and Queen were greatly delighted. The gentleman who assumed the character of Robin Hood then desired the King and Queen, with their retinue, to enter the green wood, where, in arbours made with boughs, intermixed with flowers, they were plentifully served with venison and wine by Robin Hood and his men.

About two years after, an event happened which occasioned the epithet of evil to be added to this day of rejoicing. The citizens, being extremely exasperated at the encouragement given to foreigners, a priest, named Bell, was persuaded to preach against them at the Spital; and, in a very inflaming sermon, he invited the people to oppose all strangers: this occasioned frequent quarrels in the streets, for which some Englishmen were committed to prison.

Suddenly a rumour arose, that on May-day all the foreigners would be assassinated, and several strangers fled: this coming to the knowledge of the King's Council, Cardinal Wolsey sent for the Lord Mayor and several of the City Council, told them what he had heard, and exhorted them to preserve the peace. Upon this affair a Court of Common Council was assembled at Guildhall, on the evening before May-day, in which it was resolved to order every man to shut up his

door, and keep his servants at home ; and this advice being immediately communicated to the Cardinal, met with his approbation.

Upon this, every Alderman sent to inform his Ward, that no man should stir out of his house after nine o'clock, but keep his doors shut, and his servants within till nine in the morning. This order had not been long given, when one of the Aldermen, returning from his Ward, observed two young men at play in Cheapside, and many others looking at them. He would have sent them to the Compter, but they were soon rescued, and the cry raised of "Prentices ! Prentices ! Clubs ! Clubs !" Instantly the people arose : by eleven o'clock they amounted to six or seven hundred ; and the crowd still increasing, they rescued from Newgate and the Compter the prisoners committed for abusing the foreigners ; while the Mayor and Sheriffs, who were present, made proclamation in the King's name ; but instead of obeying it, they broke open the houses of many Frenchmen and other foreigners, and continued plundering them till three in the morning ; when beginning to disperse, the Mayor and his attendants took three hundred of them, and committed them to the several prisons. While this riot lasted, the Lieutenant of the Tower discharged several pieces of ordnance against the city, but without doing much mischief ; and about five in the morning several of the nobility marched thither, with all the forces they could assemble.

On the 4th of May, the Lord Mayor, the Duke of Norfolk, the Earl of Surrey, and others, sat upon the trial of the offenders at Guildhall, the Duke of Norfolk entering the city with 1,300 men. That day several were indicted, and on the next thirteen were sentenced to be hanged, drawn, and quartered ; for the execution of whom, ten gallowses were set up in several parts of the city, upon wheels, to be removed from street to street, and from door to door.

On the 7th of May, several others were found guilty, and received the same sentence as the former, and soon after were drawn upon hurdles to the Standard in Cheapside ; but, when one was executed, and the rest about to be turned off, a respite came, and they were remanded back to prison.

After this, the soldiers who had kept watch in the city were withdrawn, which, making the citizens flatter themselves that the King's displeasure against them was not so great as they had imagined, the Lord Mayor, Recorder, and several Aldermen, went in mourning gowns to wait upon the King at Greenwich ; when, having attended for some time at the Privy Chamber door, his Majesty with several of the nobility came forth : upon which, all of them falling upon their knees, the Recorder, in the name of the rest, in the most humble and submissive terms, begged that he would have mercy on them for their negligence, and compassion on the offenders, whom he represented as a small number of light persons. His Majesty let them know that he was really displeased, and that they ought to wail and be sorry for it ;

for, as they had not attempted to fight with those whom they pretended were so small a number of light persons, they must have winked at the matter: he therefore ordered them to repair to the Lord Chancellor, who would give them an answer. Upon which they retired, deeply mortified.

Being informed that the King was to be at Westminster Hall on the 22d of May, they resolved to repair thither; which they did with the consent of Cardinal Wolsey, Lord High Chancellor. The King sat at the upper end of the Hall, under a cloth of state, with the Cardinal and several of the nobility: and the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, Recorder, and several of the Common Council attended: the prisoners, who then amounted to about four hundred, were brought in their shirts, bound together with cords, and with halters about their necks; and among them were eleven women. The Cardinal having sharply rebuked the Mayor, Aldermen, and Commonalty for their negligence, told the prisoners that, for their offences against the laws of the realm, and against his Majesty's Crown and dignity, they had deserved death: upon which they all set up a piteous cry of "Mercy, gracious Lord! mercy;" which so moved the King, that at the earnest intreaty of the Lords, he pronounced them pardoned; upon which, giving a great shout, they threw up their halters towards the top of the Hall, crying, "God save the King!"

After this affair, the May-games were not so commonly used as before.

W. R.

ACCOUNT OF A MAY-DAY COLLATION:

Given by Whitelocke, in the English Manner (during his Embassy from Oliver Cromwell), to Christina, Queen of Sweden, and some of her favourite Ladies and Courtiers.

This being May-day, Whitelocke, according to the invitation he had made to the Queen, put her in mind of it, that as she was his mistress, and this May-day, he was by the custom of England to wait upon her to take the air, and to treat her with some little Collation, as her servant.

The Queen said the weather was very cold, yet she was very willing to bear him company after the English mode.

With the Queen were Woolfeldt, Tott, and five of her ladies. Whitelocke brought them to his Collation, which he had commanded his servants to prepare in the best manner they could, and altogether after the English fashion.

At the table with the Queen sat La Belle Countesse, the Countesse Gabriel Oxenstierne, Woolfeldt, Tott, and Whitelocke; the other ladies sat in another room. Their meat was such fowl as could be gotten, dressed after the English fashion, and with English sauces,

creams, puddings, custards, tarts, tanseys, English apples, bon chrétien pears, cheese, butter, neats' tongues, potted venison, and sweet-meats, brought out of England, as his sacke and claret also was; his beer was also brewed, and his bread made by his own servants, in his own house, after the English manner; and the Queen and her company seemed highly pleased with this treatment; some of her company said she did eat and drink more at it, than she used to do in three or four days at her own table.

The entertainment was as full and noble as the place would afford, and as Whitelocke could make it, and so well ordered and contrived, that the Queen said she had never seen any like it: she was pleased so far to play the good housewife, as to enquire how the butter could be so fresh and sweet, and yet brought out of England? Whitelocke, from his cooks, satisfied her Majesty's enquiry, that they put the salt butter into milk, where it lay all night, and the next day it would eat fresh and sweet as this did, and any butter new made, and commended her Majesty's good housewifery; who, to express her contentment to this Collation, was full of pleasantness and gaiety of spirits, both in supper-time, and afterwards: among other frolics, she commanded Whitelocke to teach her ladies the English salutation; which, after some pretty defences, their lips obeyed, and Whitelocke most readily.

She highly commended Whitelocke's musick of the trumpets, which sounded all supper-time, and her discourse was all of mirth and drollery, wherein Whitelocke endeavoured to answer her, and the rest of the company did their parts.

It was late before she returned to the Castle, whither Whitelocke waited on her; and she discoursed a little with him about his business, and the time of his audience, and gave him many thanks for his noble treatment of her and her company.

Our author informs us, that two days after this entertainment, Mons. Woolfeldt, being invited by Whitelocke, told him that the Queen was extremely pleased with his treatment of her. Whitelocke excused the meanness of it for her Majesty. Woolfeldt replied, that both the Queen and all the company esteemed it as the handsomest and noblest that they ever saw; and the Queen, after that, would drink no other wine but Whitelocke's, and kindly accepted the neats' tongues, potted venison, and other cakes, which, upon her commendation of them, Whitelocke sent unto her Majesty.

W. R.

BELTANE FESTIVAL. [See also June 23, *post*, page 54.]

[1811, pp. 426, 427.]

Mr. Jamieson has favoured us with an excellent disquisition on the word *Beltane*; part of which shall, with your permission, be quoted, as an article worthy of appearing in the Gentleman's Magazine.

"BELTANE, BELTEIN, s. The name of a sort of Festival observed on the first day of May, O.S.; hence used to denote the term of Whitsunday.

"At Beltane, quhen ilk bodie bownis
To Peblis to the Play,
To heir the singin and the soundis,
The solace, suth to say,
Be firth and forrest furth they found;
Thay *graythit* tham full gay,
"Peblis to the Play," St. I.

"On the first of May, O.S., a Festival called *Beltan* is annually held here. It is chiefly celebrated by the Cow-herds, who assemble by scores in the fields, to dress a dinner for themselves, of boiled milk and eggs. These dishes they eat with a sort of cakes baked for the occasion, and having small lumps in the form of *nipples*, raised all over the surface. The cake might, perhaps, be an offering to some Deity in the days of Druidism.—P. Logierait, Perth. Statist. Acc. v. 84.

"A town in Perthshire, on the borders of the High-lands, is called *Tillie* (or *Tullie*) *Beltane*, i.e., the eminence, or rising ground, of the fire of Baal. In the neighbourhood is a Druidical Temple of eight upright stones, where it is supposed the fire was kindled. At some distance from this, is another Temple of the same kind, but smaller, and near it a well still held in great veneration. On *Beltane* morning, superstitious people go to this well, and drink of it; then they make a procession round it, as I am informed, nine times; after this they in like manner go round the Temple. So deep-rooted is this heathenish superstition in the minds of many who reckon themselves good Protestants, that they will not neglect these rites, even when *Beltane* falls on Sabbath.

"The custom still remains (in the West of Scotland) amongst the Herds and young people, to kindle fires in the high grounds, in honour of Beltan: *Beltan*, which in Gaelic signifies *Baal* or *Bels-fire*, was anciently the time of this solemnity. It is now kept on St. Peter's Day.—P. Loudoun, Statist. Acc. iii. 105.

"But the most particular and distinct narration of the superstitious rites observed at this period, which I have met with, is in the Statist. Acc. of the P. of Callander, Perth.

"The people of this district have two customs, which are fast wearing out, not only here, but all over the High-lands, and therefore ought to be taken notice of, while they remain. Upon the first day of May, which is called *Beltan*, or *Beltan-day*, all the boys in a township or hamlet, meet in the Moors. They cut a table in the green sod, of a round figure, by casting a trench in the ground, of such circumference as to hold the whole company. They kindle a fire, and dress a repast of eggs and milk in the consistence of a custard. They knead a cake of oatmeal, which is toasted at the embers against a stone. After the custard is eaten up, they divide the cake into so many portions as similar to one another as possible in size and shape, as there are persons in the Company. They daub one of these portions all over with charcoal, till it be perfectly black. He who holds the bonnet is entitled to the last bit. Whoever draws the black bit is the devoted person who is to be sacrificed to *Baal*, whose favour they mean to implore, in rendering the year productive of the sustenance of man and beast. There is little doubt of these inhuman sacrifices having been once offered in this country, as well as in the East, although they now pass from the act of sacrificing, and only compel the devoted person to leap three times through the flames; with which the ceremonies of this Festival are closed.

"It would appear that some peculiar sanctity was also ascribed to the 8th of May, from the old Scottish Proverb, 'You have skill of man and beast, you were born between the *Baltans*;' i.e., 'the first and 8th of May.'

"Although the name of *Beltan* is unknown in Sweden, yet on the last day of

April, *i.e.*, the evening preceding our *Beltein*, the country people light *great fires* on the hills, and spend the night in *shooting*" (qu. making much noise?) "The first of May is also observed."

The whole of this curious Article extends to several quarto pages, to which Mr. Urban's Readers are referred. Mr. J. might on this occasion have quoted the following lines from the second Battle of Hastings, where mention is made of Salisbury Plain and Stonehenge:

"Here did the Brutons adoration paye
To the false God whom they did Tauran name,
Dightynge hys altarre with greete fyres in Maie,
Roastyng theyr vycualle round aboute the flame."

This is a pointed allusion to the ceremonies of *Beltein*, which it would be gross absurdity to believe that a boy of thirteen or fourteen years of age would have been likely to have introduced in so casual and incidental a manner. It can hardly be with propriety ascribed to the pen of any forger; although it must be admitted as a very natural allusion for Turgotus of the eleventh, or Rowley, in the 15th Century.

This passage is more worthy of notice, because Mr. Tyrwhitt, who was a stranger to the ceremonies of *Beltane*, proposed, instead of *vycualle*, to read *vyc tymes*; and I know a good Critick, a believer in the antiquity of the Poems, who was so well satisfied with the *amendment* as to express himself thus: "Notwithstanding there are accessible sources for the name of *Tauran*, the false God of the Britons, it is difficult to give Chatterton credit for any thing more than the very probable school-boy error in transcribing *vycualle* for *vyc tymes*." But it appears that Chatterton has here given us the exact word of his Author; as he has also done in the other Battle of Hastings, l. 304.

"Hereward born on Sarim's spreaddyng plaine,
Where Thor's fam'd Temple many ages stode;
Where Druids, auncient Preests, did ryghtes ordaine,
And in the middle shed the *victymes* bloude."

In one Poem, we find a correct allusion to the *dressing of victuals*, as described in the ceremonies of *Beltane*; and, in the other, to the sacrifices, perhaps of human victims, by the Druids.

In one of Mr. Jamieson's quotations, we are told that these *great fires* were lighted in Sweden, both on the first, and on the 8th of May; in another, that the entire month of May, in the Irish language, is, on account of these Pagan ceremonies, to this day, called, *mi, na Beal-tine*. Hence the Poems with propriety, say, "*dightynge hys altarre with greete fyres in Maie*," viz., on the 1st, the 8th, or any part of that month, and not on any one particular day. Mr. J. gives us a quotation also from an ancient Glossary, which asserts that the Druids lighted *two* great fires every year;" and hence the farther propriety of Rowley's mentioning *fire* in the plural number.

Yours, etc., JOHN SHERWEN, M.D.

May 29th.—Oak-apple Day.

[1795, *Part I.*, p. 480.]

Being at a country-town on the 29th of May last, I was very much pleased to see the good old custom of putting up oaken boughs, to commemorate the restoration of monarchy in the last century, so well preserved. Never surely was there a time, when it was more necessary to pay attention to everything of this kind than the present. Who among us, that reflects for a moment on the miseries occasioned in France by the abolition of monarchy, and the despotic reign of anarchy, if I may so express myself, does not feel abundant cause for thankfulness that he lives in a country where the most perfect form of government is established of any in the known world?

But, not to detain Mr. Urban with trite observations on a subject, which to do justice to I feel myself very unequal, let me beg that some of his very respectable correspondents will have the goodness to inform me why the above-mentioned boughs are carefully taken down at twelve o'clock. This may appear a trifling enquiry; but I very much wish to know the reason of it.

While I am soliciting information concerning the above, I will take the opportunity of requesting to know, through the medium of your very useful and entertaining miscellany, Mr. Urban, why the 14th of February is called Valentine's day, and the cause of its being observed in so singular a manner. [See note 16.]

An answer to the above enquiries will very much oblige,

Yours, etc., IGNORAMUS.

[1812, *Part I.*, p. 339.]

I herewith send you "an account of the May Game," as performed at Richmond, Yorkshire, on the 29th of May, 1660, by the inhabitants of that borough, whereby they demonstrated their universal joy and satisfaction for the happy return of King Charles II., whom God was pleased to make the instrument of delivering this nation from tyranny, usurpation, and the dismal effects of a civil war: taken from the copy of a letter from one in the country to a friend in London. If you think it will give entertainment to your readers, it is very much at your service.

R. S.

"—They came into the town in a solemn equipage, as follows:

"1. Three anticks before them with bagpipes.

"2. The representative of a Lord, attended with trumpets, four pages, as many footmen, fifty attendants all suited as became persons of this quality.

"3. The representative of a Sheriff, with forty attendants in their liveries.

"4. The Bishop of Hereford, with four pages and footmen, his chaplain, and twenty other household officers, besides their attendants.

"5. Two companies of morrice dancers, who acted their parts to the satisfaction of all spectators.

"6. Sixty nymphs, with music before them, following Diana; they were all richly adorned in white and gorgeous apparell, with pages and footmen attending them.

"7. Three companies of footmen with Captain and other Officers in great magnificence.

"8. Robin Hood in scarlet, with forty howmen, all clad in Lincoln green.— Thus they marched into the town; now follows their performance in the town.

"They marched decently in good order round the market cross; and came to the church, where they offered their cordial prayers for our most gracious sovereign, a sermon being preached at that time.

"From thence my lord invited all his attendants to his own house to dinner. The Rev. Bpp. did the same to all his attendants, inviting the minister and other persons to his own house, where they were sumptuously entertained.

"The soldiers marched up to the cross, where they gave many volleys of shot, with push of pike, and other martial feats.

"There was erected a scaffold and bowers, where the morrice dancers and nymphs acted their parts, many thousands of spectators being come out of the country and villages adjacent. Two days were spent in acting Robin Hood, the Sheriff and the Rev. Bpp., who on his own proper charge sent bottles of sack to several officers acting in the play, who performed their parts to the general satisfaction of all spectators, with acclamations of joy for the safe arrival of his sacred Majesty. Something might be expected of the chief magistrates of the town; they permitted the conduit to run water all the while.

"The preceding rejoicings were performed by the commonalty of this borough. We had also a tryal before the high court of justice this morning, where was present the judge, and plaintiff, defendant, receiver, witnesses, and umpire. After hearing the whole matter in controversies and disputes, the defendant and witnesses terminated the business in a pitched field with such weapons as the place afforded."

June 23rd.—Baal Fires. [See also May 1st, *ante*, page 50.]

[1791, pp. 427, 428.]

Modern antiquaries are disposed to reject, *in toto*, any proofs adduced of an intercourse subsisting, at a remote period, between the Eastern nations, or their colonies, and the inhabitants of the British Isles (the Isles of Scilly excepted); and to treat as fanciful, or accidental, all such analogies of custom, or of language, as are pointed out by Mr. Williams, in your present volume, p. 107. But, while they endeavour to overturn this hypothesis, they should at least offer some other in its room, and account for facts, the existence of which they do not pretend to deny, in some more probable manner.

The scene of Plautus, in the Phœnician language, has been collated with the Hiberno-celtic by Colonel Vallancey, in his *Collectanea de Rebus Hibernicis*, and found to be so exactly similar, that the difference is greater between the English of Chaucer and of Pope.

It has been alleged, indeed, that the learned colonel gave a twist to the construction, to make them tally more exactly: if so, such a literary imposition deserves to be detected and exposed.

The following are a few facts which I wish to see accounted for, and which every traveller in Ireland cannot avoid observing, they are so universal. On the eve of the 24th of June they light large fires

everywhere throughout the island. When these fires are almost burnt out, they not only drive their cattle through them, but jump over them themselves. In Dublin, the only place where they are prohibited, they fix a bush in the middle of the street, and stick it full of lighted candles.

On the 1st of May, all the young men assemble in their several districts, and go in procession, dressed out in ribbons, garlands, etc. The leader bears on a pole a double circle of hoops, in the centre of which hangs a gilt ball. They call at every house where a marriage had taken place since the last May-day. The new-married lady, together with a pecuniary present, presents another ball, which is, like the former, elevated on another pole.—This last ceremony is only practised in the South of Ireland.

Many places in Ireland, as names of mountains, rivers, and towns, are called, or begin with, the word *Bal*. One very remarkable one occurs in *Bal-tin-glas*; that is, *The Place, or Receptacle, of the Fire of the Sun*: it is situate, I think, in the county of Wicklow.—To all this may be added the numerous and really surprising remains of antiquity, totally unlike any others, that have been, and still continue to be, found in the bogs, etc.

Those who are curious may see an account of some of them, with accurate representations, in Mr. Gough's new edition of Camden.

E. W.

[1792, pp. 500, 501.]

The fires on St. John's eve are not peculiar to Ireland; they are lighted in the South of France also, and seem to be a continuation of the Roman *Palilia*; but I never saw the bush with lighted candles in Dublin, though I have resided there some years. Not having been much in the South of Ireland, I have not seen or heard of the May procession which he [E. W.] mentions; but, if these ceremonies have no more connection with *Baal* than the derivation of *Baltinglas*, they prove very little of the Phœnician origin of the Irish. For *Balla* (or, as it is now written, *Bally*), in composition *Bal*, begins the name of an infinite number of towns, parishes, and farms in Ireland. *Balla* signifying an enclosed place, and answering to the Saxon termination *ton*, still to be found in so many names of places in this country, *Baltinglas* is then to be explained, *Balla-tigh-glàs*, the *enclosure of the greenhouse*, or, putting *teagh* in the nominative case, the *house of the green enclosure*. A hundred instances occur of names beginning by *Bal-ti*, which are known to be of that import only.

AN OCCASIONAL CORRESPONDENT.

[1795, *Part I.*, pp. 123-125.]

Curious and learned reflections, by the late Rev. Donald M'Queen of Kilmuir, in the Isle of Sky, on antient customs preserved in that island; and a curious fact relating to the worship of Baal, in Ireland.

The worship of the Supreme Being is congenial to the mind of man, for there has been no country so barbarous, in the old or new world, where religion, under some form, has not been practised.

A few starving vagrants in either can make no exceptions against the general consent of nations; and as to these, it may be asked, of the paradoxical travellers, who assert the solecism, whether they continued long enough with these itinerant tribes to be able to make their observations conclusive; and whether they were sufficiently acquainted with their language and manners to determine the question.

Among a people, too, in such a situation, their poverty and unsettled life are inadequate to costly sacrifices, and their time must be chiefly spent in search of subsistence in war, or in hunting, adverse to the appearance of religious ceremonies. Offerings, however, of some kind or other, have been made in all ages and countries, to appease offended deity; plants of mystical virtue, fruits, rough barley, before the invention of milns, libations of milk or of honey, were all the marks of gratitude, or means of expiation, or of giving effect to their prayers, that could be expected, in the first needy frugal stages of society, before extensive states were formed. When men were full masters of natural liberty, unrestrained by law or order, every one was king and priest in his own family. The first offerings, we have any account of, are recorded in the Jewish scriptures, when tillage, and the keeping of flocks, became the business of men, and when we find the fruits of the earth, and the firstlings of the flock, offered up to God, by Cain and by Abel; and these the first fruits were offered during the old Jewish œconomy, a practice which seems coeval with society, and spread abroad, over the world, with the various emigrant colonies from the original hive. Thus also the *αχροβερνα* were offered, the best and choicest part of the spoils from the top of the heap before division. You will find, in Callimachus's hymn to Delos, that the inhabitants of every part of the globe, however confined their notions were of geography, sent an offering of the first fruits to Delos, the favourite isle of Apollo and Diana, who were particularly worshipped there. Among the rest, our ancestors, the Hyperboreans, had their sheaf or sheaves of corn conveyed by two maidens in the bloom of youth, who never returned to their own country, but had divine honours paid them by the Deleans; so that afterwards the offering was annually sent from tribe to tribe, until it reached Delos. The procession is thus described by Pausanias: "The Hyperboreans sent the holy offering to the Arvmaspi; they to the Isidoneans, who con

veyed it to the Scythians; then to Sinopè; until the Athenians at length transported it to Delos. Apollo was a principal object of worship among the Hyperboreans; and as public and popular customs, particularly those of religion, make impressions that will remain after the causes which gave them birth are no more, so you can trace out the old practices and opinions of faith which have been long ago discarded; and, it is by no means improbable, that some remains of this custom may still be found in this Hyperborean country; where in every district *there is still to be met* with a rude stone consecrated to *Gruagach*, or Apollo.

The first who is done with his reaping sends a man or a maiden with a bundle of corn to his next neighbour, who hath not yet reaped down his harvest, who, when he has finished, despatches to his own next neighbour, who is behind in his work, and so on, until the whole corns are cut down.* This sheaf is called the cripple goat, *an Gaobhir Bhacagh*, and is at present meant as a brag, or affront, to the farmer, for being more remiss or later than others in reaping the harvest, for which reason the bearer of it must make as good a pair of heels, for fear of being ill-used for his indiscretion, as he can.

Whether the appellation of cripple goat may have any the least reference to the Apollonian altar of goats' horns, I shall not pretend to determine.

Curious fact relating to the worship of Baal in Ireland.

"The Irish have ever been worshipers of fire, and of Baal, and are so to this day. This is owing to the Roman Catholics, who have artfully yielded to the superstitions of the natives, in order to gain and keep up an establishment, grafting Christianity upon Pagan rites.

"The chief festival, in honour of the sun and fire, is upon the 21st of June, when the sun arrives at the summer solstice, or rather begins its retrograde motion. I was so fortunate, in the summer of 1782, as to have my curiosity gratified by a sight of this ceremony, to a very great extent of country. At the house where I was entertained, it was told me, that we should see, at midnight, the most singular sight in Ireland, which was the lighting of fires in honour of the sun. Accordingly, exactly at midnight, the fires began to appear; and taking the advantage of going up to the leads of the house, which had a widely extended view, I saw on a radius of 30 miles, all around, the fires burning on every eminence which the country afforded. I had a farther satisfaction in learning, from undoubted authority, that the people danced round the fires, and at the close went through these fires, and made their sons and daughters, together with their cattle, pass through the fire; and the whole was conducted with religious solemnity."

This account, Mr. Urban, is exceedingly curious; and though I forbear the mention of names, I can venture to assure you that it is authentic.

ALBANICUS.

* This antient custom is, to this day, faintly preserved all over Scotland; by what we call the corn-lady, or maiden in a small packet of grain, which is hung up when the reapers have finished.

[1795, *Part I.*, pp. 201-203.]

Albanicus (p. 124) must have been greatly misinformed about Ireland, or in a very jocular humour, when he wrote his remark on the Irish worshipping fire and Baal. What he calls "a festival in honour of the sun and fire," held to this day on the 23rd of June (not the 21st, as Albanicus has mentioned), is nothing more than a general rejoicing throughout that country on the eve of St. John, St. John's day being a very great holiday in their estimation. It is truly laughable to hear this writer say, that he "was gratified by a sight of this ceremony;" and then tells you he "only saw the fires from the leads of the house, wherein he was entertained, affording him a view through a great extent of country, not less than thirty miles." We find, therefore, Albanicus gives this account, not from what he himself saw (although he wishes to be understood that he did see the ceremony), but from what he "learned" from others. So much for his authority.

Now, Mr. Urban, suppose this writer had been informed, as many Englishmen and strangers in Ireland have been, that some of the Irish have wings, and can fly; would he or any sensible man, give credit to such a story, and even commit it to writing, and endeavour to persuade mankind that it was true? There are, Sir, in Ireland, a number of humorous people, who are fond of and ever are ready at what is called, "putting tricks upon travellers;" travellers, who, foolishly believing all they hear, return home, and entertain the world with some very marvellous accounts of what they had seen and learned in the course of their travels.

And I am inclined to believe that these kinds of misrepresentations and folly are not confined to descriptions of any country; but as Ireland is the only country in which I have travelled out of my own native country England, to that country, and the misrepresentations concerning it, I will confine myself; and if a residence amongst the Irish during fourteen years, traversing every county in Ireland, some twice, three and four times over, can be thought to afford me an opportunity of forming a judgment about what I am writing, I shall, I trust, be entitled to more credit from your numerous readers than Albanicus.

The Irish have certainly a number of peculiarities attached to their religion, some good, and others detestable; for instance, when a woman has milked her cow, she dips her finger into the milk, with which she crosses the beast, and piously ejaculates a prayer, saying, "Mary and our Lord, preserve thee until I come to thee again!" and again, in going to bed and on blowing or putting out the candle, "May the Lord renew or send us the light of heaven!" A rite, which I call detestable, is that on Candlemas day, when the people assemble at mass, and bring with them such a quantity of candle as they think they shall have occasion for for the year. These candles are blessed by the priests in high mass; after which they are dispersed, as

occasion requires, in the cure of wounds, aches, and diseases, and other purposes equally absurd and superstitious. Hence Albanicus might as well conclude that the Irish people are idolaters, and worship cows and candles, as that because they make a bonfire on a rejoicing night, merely to usher in what they term a great festival, they "worship the fire and Baal." Upon Christmas eve, it has ever been the custom to usher in the birth of our Saviour by the ringing of bells, which all good Christians are delighted to hear, and many will even sit up until midnight on purpose to partake of the general joy: hence will any man say that we worship these instruments of religious joy, the bells?

As my business in Ireland required my attending all parts of it, I fixed my residence near the centre of the kingdom. Upon the hill of Mullingar (known in the map by the name of Petitswood, being part of the estate belonging to George Rochforte, esq.) I resided several years. On this beautiful eminence, on St. John's eve, fires were always made by the natives (Protestants as well as Roman Catholics), and from this eminence we could see other fires, even to Chloghan hill in the King's county, and also those in the county of Roscommon. But I never saw or heard, nor anyone else, I believe, until Albanicus informed us, that any religious rite was ever performed at these fires; no son, nor daughter, nor cattle were ever forced to pass through the fire with religious solemnity! Pagan rites are in Ireland totally unknown; the priests are too watchful over the people's minds and their *pence* to suffer the Christian scheme to lose any of its weight. Albanicus concludes by saying, "this account is exceedingly curious;" indeed, it is marvellous, so much so, that I hope it will not long be believed, notwithstanding, he ventures to assure us "it is authentic." Albanicus modestly "forbears to mention names in corroboration of his testimony;" but this modesty I shall not forbear. I am not afraid to contradict such testimony, and do declare the whole he says concerning the Irish worshipping "Baal and the fire to this day" is as great an imposition on mankind as are the prophecies of the noted Richard Brothers & Co.

W. BINGLEY.

[1795, *Part I.*, pp. 274, 275.]

Your correspondent Albanicus, p. 125, after having presented us with a curious fact relating to the worship of Baal in Ireland, observes, "this account is exceeding curious; and, though I forbear the mention of names, I can venture to assure you that it is authentic."

The very same fact Mr. Polwhele has noticed, and commented on at large, in his "Historical Views of Devonshire."

"Being at a gentleman's house," says a correspondent of Mr. Polwhele, "about 30 miles West of Dublin, he told us, that on the 21st of June we should see an odd sight at midnight. Accordingly, at that hour, he conducted us out upon the top of his house, where, in a few minutes, to our great astonishment, we saw fires lighted on all the high places round, some nearer and some more distant. We

had a pretty extensive view, and, I should suppose, might see about 15 miles each way. There were many heights in this extent; and on every height was a fire: I counted not less than 40. We amused ourselves with watching them, and with betting which hill would be lighted first. Not long after, on a more attentive view, I discovered shadows of people near the fire, and round it; and every now and then they quite darkened it. I enquired the reason of this, and what they were about; and was immediately told, they were not only *dancing round*, but *passing through the fire*; for, that it was the custom of the country, on that day, to make their families, their sons, and their daughters, and their cattle, *pass through the fire*; without which they could expect no success in their dairies, nor in the crops, that year. I bowed, and recognized the god Baal."

This is part of a long note, "Historical Views," pp. 31, 32.

LL. B.

[1795, p. 203.]

The Scotch *Beltein*, celebrated May 1, old style, is a rural sacrifice, when the herdsmen partake of a dish of caudle, and throw over their heads a piece of cake to each, being the supposed preserver, or to some animal, the real destroyer of their flocks and herds. Pennant's *Tour in Scotland*, 1769, p. 97. The herds of several farmers gather wood, put fire to it, and dance three times southwards round the pile, p. 291.

Mr. Vallancey, collating the Japanese with the Irish language, (Collect. Hib. x. 168) says, the day of summer solstice, when the sun was at the head or beginning of the circle, they celebrated with fires in honour of Baal or *Panga Sank*, that is, the globular fire, which fires are still made all over Ireland, in honour of St. John, whose festival falls on that day.

D. H.

[1795, *Part I.*, p. 462.]

The custom of setting fire to the furze-covers on the eve of Midsummer day is common in the North of England. Before the Revolution, bonfires were lighted in every part of France on the 23rd of June, and called *Le feu de la St. Jean*. But neither in England nor France did I ever see parents drive their children through the fire. Boys were apt enough to jump over from bravado and sport.

DAMASIPPUS.

[1820, *Part I.*, pp. 499, 500.]

Some years ago enquiries were made in your Miscellany respecting the custom of lighting fires on Midsummer Eve, stated to be prevalent in the West of England. It seems to be pretty well established, that it is a relique of Pagan worship. Gebelin in his "*Allegories Orientales*, Hist. d'Hercule," observes that at the moment of summer solstice the antients were accustomed to light fires in honour of the New Year, which they held to have originally commenced in fire. Nor is there, he asserts, any computation of time more antiently received than that which fixes the beginning of the year in June. These fires, he proceeds, were accompanied with vows and sacrifices for plenty and

prosperity, with dances and leaping over the flames, and each person on his departure took a firebrand of greater or less magnitude, while the rest was scattered to the wind in order that it might disperse every evil as it dispersed the ashes.

The vigil of St. John the Baptist falling on this day, the Midsummer Eve rites seem to have been carefully practised and handed down by our more immediate ancestors; for Stowe and his contemporaries particularly describe its observance. Bourne mentions it in 1725, and Borlase about thirty years later. As to the universality of this custom throughout the nations of Celtic origin, we know that in the North of England, in Ireland, and in Scotland, it is still retained. And may perhaps argue from its name *Belteine*—*Bel's*, *Beal's*, or the Sun's fire—that it is coeval with the Aborigines of our Island, who, as well as almost every other nation of Idolaters, paid homage to that glorious luminary. Traces of it appear in Sweden, where the houses are ornamented with boughs. Stowe says they ought to be greene birch, long fennel, St. John's wort, aspin, white lillies, and such like, and the young people dance around a poll till morning, and even among the *Vehosti*, a Tartar tribe, subject to Russia, who assemble, as we are told, under a tree at night, and remain till morning on the festival of St. John, shrieking and singing and dancing round a great fire.

The best account of the attendant ceremonies is given by Googe in 1570, in a translation which he dedicated to Queen Elizabeth. [See note 17.]

"Then doth the joyfull feast of John the Baptist take his turne,
When bonfires great, with lofty flame, in every towne doe burne,
And young men round about with maydes doe daunce in every street
With garlands wrought of motherwort, or else of vervaine sweet,
And many other flowers faire, with violets in their hands;
Where as they all doe fondly thinke that whosoever stands
And thorow the flowers beholds the flame, his eyes shall feel no paine,
When thus 'till night they daunced have, they through the fire amaine
With striving minds doe run, and all their herbs they cast therein;
And then with words devout, and prayers, they solemnly begin,
Desiring God that all their illes may there confounded be;
Whereby they thinke through all that yeare from augues to be free."

Vide Strutt's "Sports and Pastimes," p. 317.

The vestiges of these rites are not quite obliterated in South Wales, and may perhaps be instanced as one amongst many proofs of resemblance between Welsh and Scottish customs. At Port-Einon, a small village in that insulated part of Glamorganshire, called Gower, culm is collected and hid against a fire on the 23d of June, as I had an opportunity of being witness to last year: on enquiry I found that the custom had been observed time immemorial. At Llangeneth, a neighbouring village, the festival of the Patron-saint or *Mabsant*, i.e., holy man, falling on the 24th, the garlands and the poll, as well as the

dances and bonfire, are still retained. This ceremonial is not wholly unknown in Pembrokeshire. It does not appear that it was necessary to light the fire invariably in the same spot, although a conspicuous situation was generally chosen. The foundations of a small enclosure once used for this purpose may still be traced in the turf about a furlong from the noted well at the secluded village of Newton in Glamorganshire. A few of the old people still remember convening there, and throwing a small cheese across through the flame on Midsummer's Eve. They report that the enclosure was afterwards used as a pound, though it seems too small for that purpose, and that the stones have been taken to mend the road that leads to the little harbour below.

I have only to add that the lines above cited contain so satisfactory a description of this curious rite, that should it fall into total disuse, I can still heartily congratulate Morganery and her neighbours on being free from the evils which it was erst intended to deprecate.

H.

June 24.—Fire Kindling.

[1795, *Part I.*, pp. 294, 295.]

It is a research no less interesting than amusing, to trace back several customs and expressions now used to their Druidical or Saxon original. I am informed by a friend, that an immemorial and peculiar custom prevails on the sea-coast of the Western extremity of Cornwall, of kindling large bonfires on the evening of June 24; and on the next day, the country people, assembling in great crowds, amuse themselves with excursions on the water. For the origin of this, no satisfactory reason can be given; therefore, conjecture is allowable, where certainty cannot be attained. I cannot help thinking it the remains of an ancient Druidical festival, celebrated on Midsummer-day, to implore the friendly influence of Heaven on their fields, compounded with that of the first of May, when the Druids kindled large fires on all their sacred places, and on the tops of all their cairns, in honour of Bel, or Belinus, the name by which they distinguished the sun, whose revolving course had again clothed the earth with beauty, and diffused joy and gladness through the creation. Their water-parties on the 24th prove, that they consider the summer season as now so fully established, that they are not afraid to commit themselves to the mercy of the waves. If we reflect on the rooted animosity which subsisted between the Romans and Druids, and that the latter, on being expelled from their former residences, found, together with the miserable remnants of the Britons, an asylum in the naturally fortified parts of the island, we shall not be surprised at their customs having been faintly handed down through such a long succession of ages. That Cornwall was one of their retreats is sufficiently proved by the numerous remains of their circular temples, cromlechs, cairns, etc.,

though of the sacred groves in which they were embosomed no vestiges now remain. We all know the avidity with which mankind adhere to, and with what reluctance they lay aside, usages delivered down to them by their ancestors, and familiar to themselves. And, when we farther consider the inveterate hatred with which the Romans endeavoured to extirpate the Druidical customs, it is not wonderful that this very circumstance should have been the means of fixing them more deeply in those places where they were preserved; as persecution has in all cases a natural tendency to strengthen what it is its wish to eradicate. Nay, even in the eleventh century, when Christianity was become the national religion, the people were so attached to their ancient superstitions, that we find a law of Canute the Great strictly prohibiting all his subjects from paying adoration to the sun, moon, sacred groves and woods, hallowed hills and fountains. If, then, this propensity to idolatry could not be rooted out of those parts of the kingdom exposed to the continual influx of foreigners, and the horrors of frequent war, how much more must it have flourished in Cornwall, and those parts, where the Druids long preserved their authority and influence! It may then be fairly inferred, that, from their remote situation, and comparative insignificance with the rest of England, they preserved those religious solemnities unmolested; and, corrupted as they must naturally be by long usage and tradition, yet are handed down to us this day with evident marks of a Druidical origin.

Our holy festival of Christmas retains in some parts of this island, particularly in Lincolnshire, the Saxon appellation of Yule, which was a peculiar solemnity, celebrated about the winter solstice, in honour of Thor, the son of Odin, and frequently conducted, according to the genius of our Saxon ancestors, with the utmost excess of feasting, drinking, etc.

DRUIDICUS.

July 15th.—St. Swithin's Day.

[1813, *Part II.*, pp. 35, 36.]

One of the most popular notions yet currently relied upon by the superstitious is, "that when it rains on St. Swithin's holiday, we shall have a continuation of wet weather for forty days;" and this conceit has received considerable encouragement, this year, from the coincidence of there having hitherto been a constant daily fall of heavy showers, commencing from the festival of that "Watery Saint." Some of your readers may not have the means of referring to the much-esteemed publication of Mr. Brady, intituled, "*Clavis Calendaria*," and may therefore, I consider, receive much gratification by a perusal of the following brief extract from that work, which treats upon this, properly denominated, "*Vulgar Adage*." After affording an interesting outline of the legend of this saint, Mr. Brady continues:

“St. Swithin, at his own previous solicitation, was buried at Winchester, in the common cemetery, or church-yard, instead of the chancel of the Minster, as was the general usage with other bishops; but his fame did not suffer by such humility: The services he had rendered the Ecclesiasticks were great, and that body did not prove ungrateful; his grave was soon marked as peculiarly efficacious to the suffering Christians, and miracles out of number were *recorded* to have been wrought by his holy remains. One man who had lost his eyes, had them restored to him; and others received similar benefits; none, indeed, were refused relief, who applied for it with an humble heart, and firm reliance in the Saint's exertion! hence he naturally soon acquired the appellation of *Merciful*. Such an extensive benevolence became the theme of universal praises; an order was obtained to remove the holy reliques into the choir, as better suiting their merits; and a grand and solemn procession was appointed to grace the ceremony. A most violent rain shower, however, fell on the destined day, and continued for 39 others, without intermission; in consequence of which, the idea of a removal was abandoned, as *displeasing* to St. Swithin, and *as such*, heretical and blasphemous; though it would appear that the Saint afterwards relented, and permitted his bones to be taken from the cemetery, and lodged among the remains of the other bishops, in the year 1093. The vulgar adage, that we shall have forty days continuance of wet weather whenever rain falls on St. Swithin's Festival, no doubt, arose from this presumed supernatural circumstance. Without disputing the fact from which the popular fancy sprang, which, notwithstanding the glaring errors and absurdities of the monkish writers, is very probable to have been the case; there is, nevertheless, not any occasion to have recourse to a miracle to account for such a phenomenon. Experience has amply shewn, that, whenever a wet season sets in about the end of June to the middle of July, when the heat of the sun is usually the most intense, it generally continues to nearly the end of the Summer, when the action of that orb has considerably abated; the rain affording matter for exhalation, always naturally the strongest at the hottest period of the year, and those exhalations yielding in return matter for rain.” [See note 18.]

August 1st.—Lammas.

[1780, p. 374.]

The reasons why the first day of August was denominated Lammas-day, and gule or yule of August, may perhaps be an entertainment for your readers.

Yours, etc., S. POLLET.

The first of August is called Lammas-day, some say because the priests were then wont to gather their tithe lambs; others derive it from the Saxon word *Leffmesse*, *i.e.*, bread mass; it being kept as a thanksgiving for the first fruits of the corn. It is also called gule or yule of August, in old almanacs *St. Peter ad Vincula*; it is derived from the French word *guel*, a *throat*, because, as the Catholics report, a certain maid, having a disorder in her throat, was cured by kissing the chains with which St. Peter was bound. [See note 18.]

August 1st—Latter Lammas.

[1754, pp. 415, 416.]

The late Mr. Ray, in his English proverbs, p. 256, very well explains the sense and meaning of the proverbial phrase *at latter*

Lammas, "ad Græcas calendas," says he, *i.e.*, never. But the question still recurs, "how came *latter Lammas* to signify never?" I answer, the first of August had a great variety of names amongst our ancestors. It was called *Festum Sancti Petri ad Vincula*, *Gula Augusti*, *Peter Mass*, and amongst the rest *Lammas*. The two former of these names depend upon an old legend, which in *Durantis* runs thus: "One *Quirinus*, a tribune, having a daughter that had a disease in her throat, she, by the order of *Alexander*, then Pope of Rome, and the sixth from St. Peter, sought for the chains with which St. Peter was bound at Rome under Nero; and having found them, she kissed them, and was healed; and *Quirinus* and his family were baptized. "Tunc dictus *Alexander* Papa hoc festum in calendis Augusti celebrandum instituit, et in honorem beati Petri ecclesiam in urba fabricavit, ubi ipsa vincula reposuit, et ad vincula nominavit, et calendis Augusti dedicavit. In qua festivitate populus illic conveniens ipsa vincula hodie osculatur."—*Durant. rationale Divin. Offic. lib. vii.*, p. 240.* The festival was instituted on occasion of finding the chains, and of the miracle wrought by them, and so was entitled *Festum Sancti Petri ad Vincula*; and because the part upon which it was performed was the *gula* or throat, in process of time it came to be called *Gula Augusti*. It took the name of *Petermas* partly from the Apostle, and partly, as I think, from its being the day when the Rome-scot or Peter-pence in ancient time (when that tribute was paid in this kingdom) was levied. The Confessor's law is very express: "The Peter-penny ought to be demanded at the feast of the Apostles Peter and Paul,† and to be levied at the feast called *Ad Vincula*."‡—*Eccles. Laws of Edward the Confessor*, A.D. mlxiv. c. ii.

We come now to *Lammas*, of which there are two etymologies. The first is in *Cowel*: "*Lammasday*," says he, "is the first of August, so called, quasi *Lamb mas*, on which day the tenants that held lands of the cathedral church at York, which is dedicated to St. Peter *ad Vincula*,§ were bound by that tenure to bring a living lamb into the church at high mass."—*Cowel's "Interpreter."* But this custom may seem too local to give occasion to so general a name, and, therefore, the etymon given us by Mr. Wheatly from *Somner* I would chuse to prefer. These gentlemen derive it from the Anglo-Saxon *hláfmæssan*, that is *Loaf-mas*, it having been the custom of the Saxons to offer on that day, universally throughout the whole kingdom, an obligation

* This legend is falsely represented by Dr. Cowel in his "*Interpreter*," v. "*Gule of August.*"

† June 29.

‡ Mrs. Johnson says, King Offa chose this time for the payment of the Peter-pence, because on this day the relics of St. Alban the martyr were first discovered to him.

This is not true; it is dedicated to St. Peter, but not to *St. Peter ad vincula*. The feast of the dedication is Oct. 1. See Mr. Drake's "*Eboracum.*"

of *loaves*, made of new wheat, as the first fruits of their new corn. It appears from many passages of the Saxon Chronicle, that this name is of great antiquity; in some of them there is the *p* prefixed, which shews it has no relation to the lamb, *agnus*; and in others, as *anno* 913, 918, 921, and 1101, 'tis expressly written *hláfmæssan*, and the learned editor and translator of the Saxon annals renders it everywhere, very justly, by *Festum primitiarum*.

Now, as to the point in hand, Lammas-day was always a great day of accounts; for in the payment of rents, etc., our ancestors distributed the year into four quarters, Candlemas, Whitsuntide, Lammas, and Martinmas, and this was every whit as common as the present division of Lady Day, Midsummer, Michaelmas, and Christmas. In regard to Lammas, besides its being one of the usual days of reckoning, it appears from the quotation taken above from the Confessor's Laws, that it was the specific day whereon the Peter-pence, a tax very rigorously exacted, and the punctual payment of which was enforced under a penalty, by the law of St. Edward, was paid. In this view, then, Lammas stands as *a day of accounts*, and latter Lammas will consequently signify *the last day of accounts*, or the day of doom, which, in effect, as to all payments of money, and in general as to all worldly transactions, whatever, is *never*. "Latter" here is used for last, the comparative for the superlative, just as it is in like case in the Book of Job, xix. 25, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth," meaning the last day. That the last day, or the latter Lammas, as to all temporal affairs, is indeed *never*, may be illustrated by the following story. A man at confession owned to having stolen a sow and pigs. The father confessor exhorted him to restitution. The man said, some were sold and some were killed; but the priest, not satisfied with that, told him they would follow him to the day of judgment, if he did not make restitution; upon which the man replies quickly, "I'll restore 'em *then*," as much as to say, *never*.

G. P.

[1815, *Part I.*, pp. 577-581.]

The inclosed letter, written in 1785 by a man of 70 years of age, describing the Lammas Feast (for which see "Transactions of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland," pp. 192 to 198), and other customs of his early days, is at your service. [See Note 20.]

Yours, etc., SCRUTATOR.

The antiquity and first institution of the Herds in the West end of Cramond parish and Corstorphin parish meeting together on Lammas day on Lenie-hill, and the Herds in the East end of Cramond and Corstorphin [*sic*] parish meeting on Clermieston-hill, is of antient practice,

and hath been handed down and kept in practice from century to century. As for the towries (towers) on the above-mentioned hills, which are about two miles distant from each other, and in view of each other, they were commonly taken little notice of through the year till a month before Lammas, when they were rebuilt and put in good repair; their height about ten or twelve feet, about three yards wide at the bottom, built round with divots and stones till near the top, when several round divots were cut with a hole in each of them, and laid one above another on the top of the towries: and on Lammas morning the rod whereon our colours were fixed was put down the hole on the top of our towrie, and was seen by the Eastern party, letting them know that we were to meet them on Cramond Muir that day. And after the herds had all got dinner, their antient took them down from the towrie, and went down the hill with flying colours, the piper playing before him, and the herds marching behind him in order, blowing their horns, till they came down to Lenie port, where their company increased, and became stronger by the young men that there met them before they marched to battle. The form of the herds' dining-table on Lenie-hill near their towrie was about thirty feet long, three feet broad. The table was made with divots with the green side up, and all the seats round the table of the same form; and around all the table was cut out ground about a foot and a half deep, and the same breadth, that the herds might sit easie at dinner. The table continued from year to year, and needed little reparation. The common entertainment of the Herds' Lammas feast on Lenie-hill was sweet cream, butter, and cheese, which they had in abundance not only to feast themselves, but also poor boys that came that day to attend them. The Herds hired a taylor the night before Lammas, who ornamented their colours with ribbons sewed on a large table napkin, and afterwards put on a long rod, or fork-shaft. The ribbons were all borrowed from the young girls round the country-side they were acquainted with. In these days (about 50 years ago) there were no ribbons worn on the heads of farmers' wives, nor their daughters, nor their servant maids, in the West end of Cramond parish, save a belt ribbon which some young girls wore. I have heard it said that in a century back young maidens whose character was blameless in the eyes of the world, were married with their own hair ornamented, nothing on their head; and widows, and young women that had lost their reputation, were married with toys sewed round with lace, which some old women wear yet at this day. The order of the herds marching to meet one another on Cramond Muir was thus: the piper went playing before, the antient with flying colours next, the herds in three men rank with horns blowing after; and when they met on the road that yet goes through Cramond Muir, the East party stood on the East side of the road, and the West party stood on the West side of the road, and

they saluted each other. The reason of a battle between the two parties was, when they were near equal in strength, that the one would not lower their colours to the other ; but when one party was stronger than the other, the stronger party asked the weaker party what they were for ; and if they said they were for peace, then the antient of the stronger party ordered the antient of the weaker party to lower his colours ; and after lowering his colours, they shook hands, and ordered their piper to play up, and they took a dance together, and parted in peace. Sometimes they ran a race before they left the Muir ; and after that, each went to their respective places, and spent the afternoon in joviality, in running races, and playing at the ball and penny stone (quoits), which were games practised in these days. As for the number of men and boys, sometimes more, sometimes fewer, perhaps about thirty young men on the Western side and as many boys ; and as for the number of the races, sometimes two, sometimes three ; and the common thing that the herds received that day from their masters to spend was two-pence. They gave a half-penny to the races, and a half-penny to the piper, and drank or played at the ball the rest. Sometimes the young men contributed, and made a race : the length of the foot-races about a mile out and in ; the prizes about six-pence the first, three-pence or a pair of garters the second, and a little mell to the third, and if any more running they had nothing.

I shall now give you an account of the bloody battle fought on Cramond Muir : I am not sure in what year it was fought, I think it was in 1734. I heard it said at the time that the battle was observed, by a gentleman who was riding through the Muir when it began, to continue half an hour. It was said at that time to be Mr. Stewart of Binnie. There were near as many of our party fled, as were of us that stood and hazarded our lives in the high places of the field. It was said that the above-named gentleman rode after those of our side that fled, and made them return back, threatening them that if they did not, he would shoot them ; for I heard it said at the time that it was in some measure owing to this gentleman that we gained the victory. That day, when we were marching to Cramond Muir, the place appointed for battle, I was in good spirits, for there were on our side about thirty stout young men and as many boys ; and that day the East party was first on the field of battle, and they sent out a spy to meet us, and to take a view of us on our march to them ; and so soon as he met us, he began boasting like Goliah of old, telling us that there was a man among them that would beat any two of us betwixt and Kirklistown new bridge. I told him that he was not sure of what he spoke till once he made it to appear. He also boasted that our company was weaker than theirs, and that we would be made to lower our colours. I told him that he was not sure of that neither, till he made it to appear. So when we met on

the spot of ground where the battle was fought, the spy that met us, whose name was Grieve, pointing out from among their company to me, said that I was one that wanted matching. They all fixing their eyes on me, I spoke up, and said that, if they matched, we would match altogether. So their antient asked our antient, whose name was John Muir, what we were for? he returned him that answer, that he was for any thing that his company was for. So their antient told ours that we were weaker than them, and they would oblige us to lower our colours. So I then took a view of them, and turning, took a view of our own company; I thought we were an equal match to them. I then spoke up to our own company, and desired them not to lower our colours. One of them then took hold of our colours; and expressed himself in the following manner: "Come, let us go to Mutton-hole." I then, seeing the fork-shaft taken hold of whereon our colours were fixed, to carry them off, was lifting my stick to knock him down. At the same instant, Grieve, whom I above named, having his eye on me, cried out that I was the first that lifted a stick. Then the battle was set on in array with great fury; sure I am, not in military order, one knocking down another. If there were any bystanders there, they might have seen at the onset 20 or 30 knocked down in a minute; and at the same instant there were four of them striking against me, and I alone striking against them, when one of them drew out from before me, and came behind my back, and struck me on the head, which made me fall to the ground; and after lying on the ground, he struck me on the left arm and hand, which made my hand swell, being the hand that I held my stick in. So soon as I found them not striking on me, I sprang up to my feet; my stick lying on the ground at my feet, I took hold of it, and the first man that I ran to and struck at was John Muir, our own antient, his back being to me, and being so ordered that I being at some distance from him, the end of my stick struck on his shoulders or back, which made him look back: I then seeing his face, said, "O John, is that you?" I after ran to Robert Cunningham, at that time a farmer's son in Clermeston, and struck him on the head, which made him fall in a whin-bush, and made a woman cry out and call me a "murdering dog," for women were coming running for fear of their children: and the cry was flying through the country side that many were lying dead on the spot where the battle was fought. After that, the Eastern party were flying and running from the field where the battle was fought, and the cry was made through our camp that our colours were carried off by our Enemies; for the fork-shaft broke near the end that our colours were fixed on, which gave one of them an opportunity of running off with them. It was said at that time that the person that ran off with both our colours and theirs did not stop till he was East at Wardie. So, after finding it true that we heard noised through our camp that our colours were carried off,

notwithstanding we had the glory of the victory, it made our anger still to increase; and after consulting together, we agreed to take four pairs of shoes off their feet; and having loosed the buckles of Thomas Hodges, yet alive, we changed our minds, thinking it too cruel. We then agreed and took four of their coats off their backs, the above-named person being one of the four, which we carried to Lenie-port in triumph, and kept till we received our colours. So we spent that afternoon rejoicing in the victory that we that day had obtained over our Enemies, and did run no races, but drank the money that we had collected for them; and got our heads dressed that were wounded, Mrs. R. of P. being the only doctress that clipt off the bloody hair from several of their wounds, and dressed them. My head was not cut, though I got a stroke which made me fall to the ground.

Some days after the battle, we heard that our colours were lying at Cowet bridge, within a mile of Edinburgh. We wearying to get our colours back, in order to get the ribbons that were on them, which were borrowed from the young lasses in the neighbourhood, returned back to them, which would have been about one pound sterling in value; about five or six of us agreed, all able young men, to go East, and get our colours; and on our journey East we held a council of war, lest any of the men of the place, or washer-wives, should fall on us, or refuse to give us our colours, and agreed to stand close to one another with our backs to each other, that none might come behind our backs to knock us down; and we all resolved to fight while we were able to stand; but we received our colours without any resistance made, and ordered them to come West for their coats. I remember the year after, I went to Cramond Muir with the Western herds, and we were stronger than the Eastern herds; and we made them lower their colours to the ground, and I trampled them with my feet, which was very mortifying to them. I heard it said that, several years before that time, the Eastern herds hired two soldiers that were marching on the road to go to Cramond Muir to fight with them against the Western herds; and the same year the Western herds got the victory, and the soldiers got their skins well paid, which made them swear that they never would go to a club-battle again. I knew a married man who went to Cramond Muir with the Western herds one year, and carried their colours, and that his wife might not know, put a cravat in his pocket lest there should be a fight, and the cravat about his neck made red with blood: and the same year there was a bloody battle, which gave him occasion to put it about: his name was James Fortoun. I have heard it said long ago that they have been carried from the field of battle on both sides in blankets; but I never heard of any that died.

The meeting together of the Whipmen, for any thing I know, is also of antient date. The reason of their meeting together once

every year is to keep up brotherly love and good order among the whipmen. The young whipmen were received into membership about twelve or fourteen years of age, when they could drive a plough or go along with a full ploughman and drive two loaded horses; for in these days, about forty or fifty years ago, before the toll-roads were made, coals and lime were carried in sacks on horseback, and when a young whipman was received into membership, he was bound to carry in his bonnet (for there were no hats worn among the vulgar in those days) a knife, needle, and thread, and if his neighbour's horse threw off the load, being alone, and they within cry of their neighbour, they were bound to return and help their neighbour on with his load. If one man came on the coal or lime hill, and several of his neighbours before him, they were bound to wait and help him and bring him along with them. They were bound not to speak ill of their master behind his back, but to be faithful in his service behind his back as well as before his face. When carts began to be in fashion after the toll-roads were made, if a whipman couped (overturned) his cart, he was fined, if tome (empty), eightpence; if full, fourpence. Commonly the whipmen in these days had their meetings at public-houses on the road sides. Every meeting of whipmen had one bailie and two officers, which were chosen on the day of their meeting before they parted, and were to continue that year to observe good order in the quarter wherein they were members: and if any of that quarter was guilty of a fault, the bailie ordered his officer to summon him before him against their next meeting, and he was fined according to the rules of the law the whipmen prescribed. On the day that the whipmen met, being once a year in the summer season, they hired a piper, and were very merry in the afternoon; sometimes the servant-girls that lived near the place of their meeting would come to them, and the young lads and they would have a dance together. When a gentleman was riding by the whipmen on his journey, the bailie of the whipmen, with his bonnet in his hand, and his officer at his back with the pint stoup and cap with ale, and the piper playing, the bailie of the whipmen saluted the gentleman, and desired the favour of him to drink with the whipmen. Commonly the gentleman stopped his horse, took the cap in his hand, and drank the bailie and whipmen's health; and after throwing them a sixpence or shilling, they wished him a good journey with a loud huzza.

The blowing of horns is of antient date, as we read in scripture; and still continues in practice by posts when coming through towns. Horns in the night-season are heard a great way off, and in the winter-season were blown at every farmer's house about eight at night, when they suppered the horses and cows; and as there were no watches in these days, nor clocks in the West end of Cramond parish, the stars were their rule by night, to wit, the seven stars, the evening and morning stars, and the cock-crowing in the morning: these

were all the rules that we then observed, and were never far disappointed.

I had almost forgot to mark down the names of two of our men, which ought to be kept in record written on parchment in letters of gold : to wit, James Lerman, James Letham. The first fought with a strong lillie oak stick, with a knot on the out end of it ; the second fought with two catch shafts, one of which he lifted from one of his neighbour's sides after he was knocked down ; he fought with one, and kept off the strokes that his Enemies gave with the other. These two men waxed valiant in fight, and made several to fall to the ground ; and, like David's valiant men of old, ought to be named among the first three.

As for the antiquity of the bagpipes, none can doubt but that they are of antient date, as we read of them written in Scripture. About 50 years ago I have been one of four coming home from the coals playing on the bagpipes ; about 40 loaded horses and 20 men and boys driving them. We have played on the bagpipes through Linlithgow, and all the shoemakers looking over their windows on us. I have played on the bagpipe through Borrowstounness after my horses were loaded, and have been saluted with the pint stoup and cap, and made to drink and nothing to pay. I have played on the bagpipe through the Grass market, Edinburgh, when coming from the East coals. In these days there were no Seceders. We were innocently merry together ; and, like the primitive Church of old, continued in love one with another, being of one heart and one mind.

M. C.

August 10th.—St. Lawrence's Day.

[1784, *Part II.*, p. 496.]

St. Lawrence's Day is the last of the *Dog-days* ; consequently, when a labourer has been spent with the heat of the rest, he may be said to have finished his work, and received his wages, which ought to be high in proportion to his expence of strength.

December 5th.—Eve of St. Nicholas.

[1827, *Part I.*, pp. 407, 408.]

Among the various reprints of our old literature, which have appeared during the last twenty years, it is rather surprising that the curious poetical translation of the Popish Kingdom, by Barnaby Googe, has not found a place. [See Note 21.] I have never had the good fortune to look over the whole poem, but from the different extracts which have fallen in my way, the work, as illustrative of our ancient customs and superstitions, is highly interesting.

Many of the observances alluded to are no doubt attended with obscurity, and cannot readily be explained, not only from their long disuse, but from the circumstance possibly of their never having been

adopted in this kingdom. The original author being a German, had the ceremonies of his own country more particularly in view. One of the customs mentioned in the work, connected with the Eve of St. Nicholas, has ever struck me as one most pleasing and attractive, and which, as tending to make young faces merrier, and young hearts lighter, it is a pity we have abandoned. It is thus described in the words of Googe [lib. iv.] :

“The mothers all their children on the Eve doe cause to fast,
And when they euery one at night in senselesse sleepe are cast,
Both apples, nuttes, and peares they bring, and other things beside,
As caps and shooes, and petticotes, which secretlie they hide ;
And in the morning found, they say, that this St. Nicholas brought :
Thus tender mindes to worship saints and wicked things are taught.”

Hospinian, in his *Origin of Christian Festivals*, notices the same :

“It is the custom (says he), in many places, on the Eve of St. Nicholas, to convey secretly to children small gifts of various kinds, which they imagine are brought by the saint himself, who in his passage through the towns and villages, enters in at the closed windows and distributes them.”*

Although unknown with us, the custom is still retained in some parts of the Continent and in America to the present day. Mad. de Genlis, in her *Memoirs*, thus mentions its occurrence during her residence at Bremgarten in Switzerland :

“On St. Nicholas's Day, on getting up, they all (the children) find little presents put in their shoes, which generally makes them waken before daylight.”

Mr. Blunt, in his *Vestiges of Ancient Manners in Italy* [1823], informs us, that on New Year's Eve the stockings of children are filled with cakes, comfits, etc., by a sprite or supernatural being, to whom the name of Belfana is given.

Of its celebration in America, a friend has favoured me with the following account. The similarity between the Italian Belfana and the ideal Sandy Claus of the American children is curious. “The custom alluded to in the verses of Barnaby Googe, is still kept up among the descendants of the old Dutch settlers, and those who have fallen insensibly into their habits, but they have transferred the observance from the Eve of St. Nicholas, who you know is the especial patron of little children, to that of the New Year. Long before the important night arrives, numerous conjectures and inquiries are made by the young urchins respecting the person and being of Sandy Claus (evidently a corruption of St. Nicholas), who, in the opinion of the majority, is represented as a little old negro, who descends the chimney at night, and distributes a variety of rewards with impartial justice, according to the degree of good behaviour in the candidates. But woe to the bad and the incorrigible ; a bunch

* Brand's “*Popular Antiquities*,” vol. i., p. 327.

of rods, an old shoe, or some worthless article, is sure to be their portion. At length, upon the appointed night, each child, with a face beaming with hope and gaiety, as the last act before retiring to bed, hangs up a clean stocking near the chimney, which fails not to be filled, as soon as the little ones are fast asleep, by the parents or some good aunt or grandmother, with all sorts of bon bons, toys, picture-books, etc., and especially with the much-admired eatable of the season, the New Year cookie. As may be well imagined, daylight has scarcely appeared before all are alert, and even while it is yet dark, a bold boy is now and then found who will creep out of bed to feel if his stocking be well swelled or not. The treasures are emptied out and spread upon the bed-clothes with all the joy and exultation natural to childhood, and their good or bad fortune, with the little incidents connected with the ceremony, serves for the busy chat of the breakfast table, and for the following week or two. You will agree with me, I am persuaded, that this is a most pleasing custom, filling the heart of the child with delight, recalling to mind in the older members the joyous moments of their younger days, and affording the parents an opportunity of creating many an hour of happiness, in which their fond affection participates equally with their offspring."

The New Year Cookie mentioned above is a particular sort of cake made at this season of the year, and is fancifully stamped and shaped, and distributed along with *liqueurs* to visitors on the first of January. It may possibly be the remains of an ancient Catholic custom common in the seventh century, and which was prohibited by a canon of the Council of Constantinople, held in 692, of preparing cakes at Christmas, to be eaten in honour of the Virgin's lying in. It is still usual with our ladies, when confined, to distribute cakes, etc., to visitors. Cakes, however, may have been included in the Roman *Strenæ*, or New Year's Gifts; and thus the custom, united with the observance in honour of the Virgin, may have descended to the present time.

H.

OLD CUSTOMS.

[1785, *Part II.*, p. 853.]

In these parts several old customs are still in use; such as at Christmas great blocks of wood burnt in the hall for the neighbours, with cakes and ale and lamb's-wool; carol-singers, morris-dancers, wassellers, etc.

On Plough-Monday they dress up a plough, which is carried about. Another ceremony is *Heaving* on Easter-Monday. At another time of the year *Blazing*, which is straw lighted at night on the tops of trees. The old bell-harp is likewise a favourite instrument with the country people. [See note 22.]

Yours, etc., OBSERVATOR.

Christmas-Eve.

[1820, *Part I.*, p. 33.]

I beg to communicate to you an ancient superstitious custom, still obtaining at Tretyre, in Herefordshire, upon Christmas Eve. They make a Cake, poke a stick through it, fasten it upon the horn of an ox, and say certain words, begging a good crop of corn for the master. The men and boys, attending the oxen, range themselves around. If the ox throws the cake behind, it belongs to the men; if before, to the boys. They take with them a wooden bottle of cyder, and drink it, repeating the charm before-mentioned. I strongly suspect, from the ox and the cake, an allusion to some sacrifice to Ceres; and the *Confarreatio*, the Harvest-home, being a ceremonial appertaining to that Goddess; but I have no means of referring to the new Edition of the "*Antiquitates Vulgares*," or time to examine the custom archæologically. [See *ante*, p. 19.]

A. B. and C.

December 25th.—Christmas.

[1811, *Part I.*, pp. 215, 216.]

Looking over your Magazine for December 1810, I find you have inserted "a newly invented Game of Cards for a Winter's Amusement." The Christmas entertainments of the present day differ widely from those of old. Chatterton has given "the Antiquity of Christmas Games," which may amuse those of your Readers who are unacquainted with the Manners of our Ancestors, and with the writings of Chatterton.

R. S.

"In the days of our Ancestors, Christmas was a period sacred to mirth and hospitality. Though not wholly neglected now, it cannot boast of the honours it once had; the veneration for religious seasons is fled, and old English hospitality is long since deceased.—The antient Christmas gambols were, in my opinion, superior to our modern spectacles and amusements; wrestling, hurling the ball, and dancing in the woodlands, were pleasures for men; it is true, the conversation of the hearth-side was the tales of superstition: the Fairies, Robin Goodfellow, and Hobgoblins, never failed to make the trembling audience mutter an Ave Maria, and cross their chins; but the laughable exercises of blindman's buff, riddling, and question and command, sufficiently compensated for the few sudden starts of terror. Add to these amusements the wretched voices of the chanters and sub-chanters; howling carols in Latin; the chiming of consecrated bells; the burning consecrated wax-candles; curiously representing the Virgin Mary; praying the Saint whose monastery stood nearest; the munching consecrated cross-loaves, sold by the monks; all which effectually eradicated the spectres of their terrific stories. Nor were these the only charms against the foul fiends and nightmare; sleeping cross-legged, like the effigies of Knights Templars and Warriors, and the holy hush and Church-yard yew, were certain antidotes against those invisible beings. After this representation, I may be thought partial to my own hobby-horse, as an Antiquary, in giving the preference to the amusements of the days of old; but let the sentimental reader consider that the tales of superstition, when believed, affect the soul with a sensation pleasurably horrid: we may paint in more lively colours to the eye; they spoke to the heart.—The great

Barons and Knights usually kept open houses during this season, when their villains or vassals were entertained with bread, beef, and beer, and a pudding, wastol cake, or Christmas kitchel, and a groat in silver at parting; being obliged, in return, to wave the full flaggon round their heads, in honour of the master of the house. Sometimes the festival continued till Twelfth-day, when the baron, or his steward, took the deis, or upper seat of the table, and after dinner gave every man a new gown of his livery, and two Christmas kitchels.—This kind of liberality endeared the barons to the common people, and made them ever ready to take up arms under their banners. A register of the nunnery of Keynsham relates, that William, Earl of Gloucester, entertained two hundred knights with tilts and fortunys at his great manor of Keynsham, provided thirty pies of the Eels of Avon, as a curious dainty; and on the Twelfth-day began the Plays for the knights by the monks; with miracles and maumeries for the henchmen and servants, by minstrels.—Here is plainly a distinction made between maumeries and miracles, and the more noble representations comprehended under the name Plays. The first were the holiday entertainments of the vulgar; and the other of the Barons and nobility. The private exhibitions at the manors of the Barons were usually family histories; the monk, who represented the master of the family, being arrayed in a tabard (or herald's coat without sleeves) painted with all the hatchments of the names. In these domestic performances, absurdities were unavoidable; and in a play wrote by Sir Tibbet Gouges, Constance, Countess of Bretagne and Richmond, marries and buries her three husbands in the compass of an hour. Sometimes these pieces were merely relations, and had only two characters of this kind, as that in Weever's Funeral Monuments. None but the patrons of Monasteries had the service of monks in performing plays on holidays; provided the same contained nothing against God or the Church. The public exhibitions were superior to the private; the plot, generally, the life of some Pope, or the founder of the Abbey the Monks belonged to. I have seen several of these pieces, mostly Latin, and cannot think our ancestors so ignorant of dramatic excellence as the generality of modern writers would represent: they had a good moral in view, and some of the mummeries abound with it, which though low now, was not so then. Minstrels, jesters, and mummers, was the next class of performers; every knight had two or three minstrels and jesters, who were maintained in his house, to entertain his family in their hours of dissipation; these Chaucer mentions in the following passages:

“ ‘Doe comme, he saied, myn mynstrales,
And jestours for to tellen us tales,
Anon in mye armyage.
Of Romaunces yatte been royals,
Of Popes and Cardinals,
And eke of love longynge.’

Rime of Sir Thopas.

“ ‘Of all manere of mynstrales,
And jestours thatte tellen tales,
Both of weeping and of yame,
And of all thatte longeth unto fame.’

Third Book of Fame.”

[See Chatterton's Works by Southey, 1803, vol. iii., pp. 83-88.]

CHRISTMAS-WASSAIL.

[1784, *Part I.*, p. 347.]

The drinking the Wassail Bowl or cup was in all probability owing to keeping Christmas in the same manner they had before the feast of Jule. There was nothing the northern nations so much delighted

in as carousing ale ; especially at this season, when fighting was over. It was likewise the custom at all their feasts for the master of the house to fill a large bowl or pitcher, and drink out of it first himself, and then give it to him that sat next, and so it went round. One custom more should be remembered ; and this is, it was usual some years ago in Christmas time for the poorer people to go from door to door with a wassail cup adorned with ribbons and a golden apple at the top, singing and begging money for it : the original of which was that they also might procure Lamb's wool to fill it, and regale themselves as well as the rich. [See *ante*, p. 16.]

ON. CHRISTMAS PYE.

[1733, pp. 652, 653.]

It's natural to delight in talking of that one loves ; you will therefore the less wonder at my sending you an Essay on Christmas Pye ; tho' indeed, it falls properly under Female Oeconomy.

I need not say anything of its grateful Flavour, which is so well known ; but it seems surprizing there should be such a thing as a Fricasee, or Ragout in the Kingdom ; and that we should be so foolishly fond of Fashions, as to imitate the Cookery of a fantastical Nation, whose natural Scarcity of Provisions puts them upon tossing up the little they have an hundred Ways.

In the Crust may be observed the Regularity of the Figures into which it is usually raised ; which seem to owe their Original to the martial Genius of our Nation. The Rules of military Architecture are observed, and each of them would serve for the Model of a Fortification. It might have been antiently the Amusement of our Heroic British Ladies, while their Spouses and Lovers were engaging their Enemies abroad, to describe in Paste the Draughts of the Towns and Castles besieged, to have the Pleasure of storming them in Effigy.

That this Dish is most in Vogue at this Time of Year, some think is owing to the Barrenness of the Season, and the Scarcity of Fruit and Milk, to make Tarts, Custards, and other Desserts, this being a Compound that furnishes a Dessert itself.

But I rather think it bears a religious kind of Relation to the Festivity from which it takes its Name. Our Tables are always set out with this Dish just at the Time, and probable for the same Reason, that our Windows are adorned with Ivy. I am the more confirm'd in this Opinion, from the Zealous Opposition it meets with from the Quakers, who distinguish their Feasts by an heretical Sort of Pudding, known by their Name, and inveigh against Christmas Pye, as an Invention of the Scarlet Whore of Babylon, an Hodge-Podge of Superstition, Popery, the Devil and all his Works.

Another Sort of People who deserve Reproof are those who in-

dulge themselves in this excellent Food, but would cut out the Clergy from having any Share in it, under Pretence that a sweet Tooth and liquorish Palate, are inconsistent with the Sanctity of their Character. Against such the famous Bickerstaff rose up, and with a becoming Zeal defended the Chaplains of Noblemen in particular, and the Clergy in general. "The Christmas Pye," says he, "is in its own Nature a kind of consecrated Cake, and a Badge of Distinction ; and yet 'tis often forbidden to the Druid of the Family. Strange ! that a Sirloin of Beef, whether boiled or roasted, when entire, is exposed to his utmost Depredations and Incisions ; but if minced into small Pieces, and tossed up with Plumbs and Sugar, changes its Property, and forsooth, is Meat for his Master."

This must be allow'd unfair Treatment. But if in the Composition the Neat's Tongue be used instead of the Sirloin, and if that Part of our Bodies receives a greater Proportion of the Nutriment, which answers to that Part of the Creature whereof we eat, then this Sort of Food is the properest in the World for the Clergy, as it must be a Strengthner of the great Instrument of Speech, the Volubility of whose Motion is of the greatest Consequence both to themselves and the Publick ; but when improved with Plumbs, etc., it must sweeten the Speech into the most perswasive Eloquence.

Now, if the Ladies think I have invaded their Province, they may take their Revenge of me, and bring my Dissertation nearer to its Subject, by putting it under the next Christmas-Pye they make.

PHILO-CLERICUS.

CHRISTMAS IN YORKSHIRE.

[1811, *Part I.*, pp. 423, 424.]

According to my promise, I have sent you an extract from the journal of a deceased friend, which relates the manner in which the inhabitants of the North Riding of Yorkshire celebrate Christmas. The account, though written in a familiar style, yet in every point will be found true.

Yours, etc., R. S.

"——— Here, and in the neighbouring villages, I spent my Christmas, and a happy Christmas too. I found the antient manners of our ancestors practised in every cottage : the thoughts of welcome-coming Christmas seem to fill the breast of every one with joy, whole months before its arrival. About 6 o'clock on Christmas Day, I was awakened by a sweet singing under my window ; surprised at a visit so early and unexpected, I arose, and looking out of the window I beheld 6 young women, and 4 men, welcoming with sweet music the blessed morn. I went to Church about 11 o'clock, where every thing was performed in a most solemn manner. The windows and pews of the Church (and also the windows of houses) are adorned with branches of holly, which remain till Good Friday. From whence this custom arose I know not, unless it be as a lasting memorial of the blessed season.

"Happy was I to find that not only the rich, but also the poor, shared the

festivity of Christmas; for it is customary for the clergymen and gentlemen to distribute to the poorest people of their own village or parish, whole oxen and sheep, and to each a pint of ale also. Such was the hospitality of our ancestors; would that such customs were still practised among us!

"In the North Riding of Yorkshire it is customary for a party of singers, mostly consisting of women, to begin, at the feast of St. Martin, a kind of peregrination round the neighbouring villages, carrying with them a small waxen image of our Saviour, adorned with box and other evergreens, and singing at the same time a hymn, which, though rustic and uncouth, is, nevertheless, replete with the sacred story of the Nativity. This custom is yearly continued till Christmas Eve, when their feasting, or as they usually call it 'good living,' commences. Every rustic dame produces a cheese preserved for the sacred festival, upon which, before any part of it is tasted, according to an old custom, the origin of which may easily be traced, she, with a sharp knife, makes rude incisions to represent the cross. With this, and furnity, made of barley and meal, the cottage affords uninterrupted hospitality. A large fire (on Christmas eve) is made, on which they pile large logs of wood, commonly called 'yule clog;' a piece of this is yearly preserved by each prudent housewife: I have seen no less than thirty remnants of these logs kept with the greatest care.

"On the feast of St. Stephen large goose pies are made, all which they distribute among their needy neighbours, except one which is carefully laid up and not tasted till the Purification of the Virgin, called Candlemas.

"On the feast of St. Stephen also, 6 youths (called sword-dancers, from their dancing with swords), clad in white, and bedecked with ribbands, attended by a fiddler, and another youth curiously dressed, who generally has the name of 'Bessy,' and also by one who personates a Doctor, begin to travel from village to village, performing a rude dance, called the sword-dance. One of the 6 above-mentioned acts the part of king in a kind of farce which consists of singing and dancing, when 'the Bessy' interferes while they are making a hexagon with their swords, and is killed. These frolicks they continue till New Year's Day, when they spend their gains at the ale-house with the greatest innocence and mirth, having invited all their rustic acquaintance.

"There is in this part of Yorkshire a custom, which has been by the country people more or less revived, ever since the alteration in the Style and Calendar: namely, the watching, in the midnight of the New and Old Christmas Eve, by Bee-hives, to determine upon the right Christmas, from the humming noise which they suppose the bees will make when the birth of our Saviour took place. Disliking innovations, the utility of which they understand not, the oracle, they affirm, always prefers the more antient custom.

"Another strange custom also prevails: that those who have not the common materials of making a fire, generally sit without one, on New Year's Day; for none of their neighbours, although hospitable at other times, will suffer them to light a candle at their fires. If they do, they say that some one of the family will die within the year.—D—D R—E."

CHRISTMAS DRAMA OF ST. GEORGE IN CORNWALL.

[1830, *Part I.*, pp. 505, 506.]

I send you an account of the Christmas drama of "St. George," as acted in Cornwall. I thereby vouch for the authenticity of what I send you. Having many friends and relations in the West, at whose houses I have had frequent opportunities of seeing the festivities, and mixing in the sports, you may be sure that "St. George," with his attendants, were personages too remarkable not to attract much of my attention, and I have seen their adventures represented frequently.

From different versions so obtained, I am enabled to state that the performance in different parishes varies only in a slight degree from each other.

St. George and the other tragic performers are dressed out somewhat in the style of Morris dancers, in their shirt-sleeves and white trowsers, much decorated with ribbons and handkerchiefs, each carrying a drawn sword in his hand, if they can be procured, otherwise a cudgel. They wear high caps of pasteboard, adorned with beads, small pieces of looking-glass, coloured paper, etc.; several long pieces of pith generally hang down from the top, with small pieces of different coloured cloth strung on them; the whole has a very smart effect.

Father Christmas is personified in a grotesque manner, as an ancient man, wearing a large mask, a wig, and a huge club, where-with he keeps the bystanders in order.

The Doctor, who is generally the Merry Andrew of the piece, is dressed in a very ridiculous manner, with a wig, three-cornered hat, and painted face.

The other comic characters are dressed according to fancy.

The Female, when there is one, is usually in the dress worn half a century ago.

The Hobby Horse, which is a character sometimes introduced, wears a representation of a horse's hide.

The Christmas play, it appears, was in vogue also in the north of England, as well as in Scotland. A correspondent of yours has already given an interesting account of that of Scotland. [See note 23.] By some the play is considered to have reference to the time of the Crusaders, and to have been introduced on the return of the adventurers from the Holy Land, as typifying their battles.

Before proceeding with our drama in the West, I have merely to observe, that the old fashion was to continue many of the Christmas festivities till Candlemas Day, and then "throw Cards and Candlesticks away."

BATTLE OF ST. GEORGE.

One of the party steps in, crying out,

"Room, a room, brave gallants, room!
Within this Court
I do resort,
To show some sport
And pastime,
Gentlemen and Ladies, in the Christmas time."

After this note of *preparation*, old Father Christmas capers into the room, saying,

"Here come I, old Father Christmas,
Welcome or welcome not;
I hope old Father Christmas
Will never be forgot.

"I was born in a rocky country, where there was no wood to make me a cradle. I was rocked in a stouring bowl, which made me round-shouldered then, and I am round-shouldered still."

He then frisks about the room until he thinks he has sufficiently amused the spectators, when he makes his exit with this speech :

"Who went to the orchard to steal apples, to make gooseberry pies against Christmas?"

These prose speeches, you may suppose, depend much upon the imagination of the actor.

Enter Turkish Knight.

Here comes I, a Turkish knight,
Come from the Turkish land to fight,
And if St. George do meet me here,
I'll try his courage without fear.

Enter St. George.

Here comes I, St. George,
That worthy champion bold,
And with my sword and spear
I won three crowns of gold.
I fought the Dragon bold,
And brought him to the slaughter,
By that I gained fair Sabra,
The King of Egypt's daughter.

Turkish Knight.

St. George, I pray be not too bold,
If thy blood is hot I'll soon make it cold.

St. George.

Thou Turkish Knight, I pray forbear,
I'll make thee dread my sword and spear.

They fight until the Turkish Knight falls.

St. George.

I have a little bottle which goes by the name of Elecampane,
If the man is alive let him rise and fight again.

The Knight here rises on one knee, and endeavours to continue the fight, but is again struck down.

Turkish Knight.

Oh, pardon me, St. George! Oh, pardon me, I crave!
Oh, pardon me this once, and I will be your slave.

The Knight gets up, and they again fight, till the Knight receives a heavy blow, and then drops on the ground as dead.

St. George.

Is there a Doctor to be found,
To cure a deep and deadly wound?

Enter Doctor.

Oh yes, there is a Doctor to be found,
To cure a deep and deadly wound.

St. George.

What can you cure?

Doctor.

I can cure the Itch, the Palsy, and Gout,
If the Devil is in him I'll pull him out.

The Doctor here performs the cure with sundry grimaces, and St. George and the Knight again fight, when the latter is knocked down, and left for dead.

Then another performer enters, and on seeing the dead body, says,

Ashes to ashes, dust to dust,
If uncle Tom Pearce won't have him, Molly must.

The Hobby Horse here capers in, and takes off the body.

Enter Old Squire.

Here comes I, Old Squire,
As black as any Friar,
As ragged as a colt,
To have fine clothes for malt.

Enter Rub a Bub.

Here comes I, Old Rub, Bub, Bub, Bub;
Upon my shoulders I carries a club,
And in my hand a frying-pan,
So am not I a valiant man?

These characters serve as a sort of burlesque on St. George and the other hero, and may be regarded in the light of an anti-masque.

Enter the Boxholder.

Here comes I, great head and little wit,
Put your hand in your pocket,
And give what you think fit.
Gentlemen and Ladies, sitting down at your ease,
Put your hand in your pockets, give me what you please.

St. George.

Gentlemen and Ladies, the sport is almost ended;
Come pay to the box, it is highly commended.
The box it would speak, if it had but a tongue;
Come throw in your money, and think it no wrong.

The characters now generally finish with a dance, or sometimes a song or two are introduced. In some of the performances, two or three other tragic heroes are brought forward, as the King of Egypt and his son, etc.; but they are all of them much in the style of that

I have just described, varying somewhat in length and number of characters. [See note 24.]

W. S.*

[1827, *Part II.*, pp. 483-486.]

CHRISTMAS FESTIVITIES IN HOLMSDALE, SURREY.†

About a week before Christmas Day it is the annual custom of the native minstrels in Holmsdale to serenade the inhabitants every morning at an early hour : then many a delusive dream is broken by "the concord of sweet sounds." The instrumental harmonists are welcomed from house to house, and hailed as the harbingers of joyous hours to come. I remember with what regularity, in the days of my youth, at this propitious period of the year, "duly as morning rose," the rousing music of *the waits* burst through the whistling of the wintry wind and startled me from the pillow—at once dissipating the gloom of darkness, recalling the soul from visionary wanderings, and awakening the animal spirits to an active sense of earthly existence. How can I forget such mornings as these ! When I peeped through the chamber window externally beautified by the glittering frost-work, there stood the venerable figure of Richard Dove, an established musician of the neighbourhood, fiddling with all his might, his head and foot beating time, while every string exulted aloud in "The Downfall of Paris," and every note tingled in the ear, crying shame to the drowsy sleeper !

In the morning of Christmas Day, it is customary to rise at an early hour, and kindle the powerful fire by which the sirloin and the plum-pudding are to be prepared for the festive circle—and then may be seen the windows, the mantel-pieces, and the well-arranged kitchen shelves, clothed in the green holly with its scarlet berry, while in the hall of the hospitable mansion, in the farm house, and even in the humble labourer's cottage, the mystic mistletoe has its share of attraction—frequently being suspended from the ceiling, in a large cluster of boughs rich in green leaves and white berries—the mirth-exciting challenger of youth, and the test of maiden coyness. Every kiss beneath it is entitled to the forfeiture of a berry fresh plucked from the bough ; and it sometimes happens that ere the Christmas holidays are over the branches and the leaves are all that can be seen of the mistletoe !

Within the happy dwellings of Holmsdale, the entertainments and the sports of Christmas are so similar to those which are the most prevalent in every part of the kingdom, that I deem it altogether un-

* In the preface of Mr. Davies Gilbert's work on "Ancient Christmas Carols," there is an account of Cornish sports, with a description of a "metrical play," which seems to be the same with that which is the subject of the preceding letter.

† Being No. III. of "Sketches in Surrey," by W. Hersec.

necessary to give a minute description of them. They are visited by the provincial vocalist with songs adapted to the occasion—not always indeed with voices adapted to music—but if there happen to be defective melody, the fault is imputed to nature, the will is readily taken for the deed, and the offering is well received when every heart is attuned to joy. The cake and the nut-brown ale, the toast and the rich elder wine, are freely dispensed to every visitor, and the usual distinctions of rank are in a great degree forgotten amid the general hilarity of the season. It is the holiday of every class, and mirth and good-fellowship reign without control. Of these delightful scenes I have often been a witness, and although I may never personally enjoy them again, I still treasure them in my memory. There may be some in my favourite dale who may peruse this little sketch, and feel pleasure in recalling the happy winter hours I have passed in their society :—by them I would be long remembered ; and, as a memorial of retrospective enjoyments, I present them with

A SONG FOR CHRISTMAS.

- “ Christmas comes but once a year,
Old wrinkled care to bury—
May Friendship banish Sorrow's tear,
And every heart be merry !
- “ Christmas comes but once a year—
May no distress annoy us !
Untried by Fortune's frown severe,
May every mind be joyous !
- “ Christmas comes but once a year,
The social hours beguiling—
Let harmony and love appear,
And every face be smiling !
- “ Christmas comes but once a year,
Crown'd with the scarlet berry—
May Friendship banish Sorrow's tear,
And every heart be merry !”

Gentle or ungentle reader ! didst thou ever know a sequestered English valley destitute of legendary lore ? Holmsdale is not without an ample share :—the loveliest scenes are visited by the ancient tribes of the fairy and the spectre, and for centuries have they “play'd fantastic tricks” in this sylvan dale. As the long evenings of the present season are usually productive of varied converse, and frequently such as gives rise not only to the loud laugh of glee, but to the introduction of narratives calculated to excite amazement, or to affect the deepest sensibilities of the heart, I will contribute to the general store by the following romantic tale ; but I cannot undertake to vouch for the accuracy of the story in all its details. Oral tradition, as it has descended from age to age, is my only authority ; and I have diligently sought in vain for any historical record. Having,

however, been personally acquainted with the spot for more than thirty years, and having often heard the outline of the narrative, and the most striking of the incidents, related "with fear and trembling," by the oldest and most steadfast believers among the natives, I will faithfully repeat what has been related to me.

The road from Reigate to Dorking leads through a lonely lane, of considerable length, into the village of Buckland. In the most obscure part of this lane a little stream of beautifully clear water crosses the way. By the side of this very stream laid a large stone for I know not how many years—perhaps for centuries. That mysterious stone and the little stream will form the foundation of our wondrous tale. "Once on a time," a lovely blue-eyed girl, whose father was a substantial yeoman in the neighbourhood, was wooed and won by the subtle arts of the opulent owner of the manor house of Buckland. In the silence of the evening the lane was their accustomed walk—the scene of her devoted love and of his deceitful vows. Here he swore eternal fidelity; and the gentle unsuspecting maid heard his earnest protestations with all the confiding affection of the female heart in its native simplicity, and confessed the power of his eloquence while her soul was absorbed in tenderness. At such a moment as this, how often has the guileless mind of youth been led astray from the path of virtue! It was now that for the first time the wily seducer cautiously communicated to the yeoman's daughter the real nature of his designs. The lovely Moon was the witness of his perfidy and of her distress. She heard the avowal in tremulous silence—but her deadly paleness, and her expressive look of mingled reproach and terror—while still on her fair countenance the lineaments of tenderness lingered—created alarm even in the mind of the villain; and he hastily endeavoured to recall the fatal declaration: but it was too late—the stricken deer was already too deeply wounded—she sprang from his agitated grasp, and with a sigh of agony her pure spirit escaped—she fell dead at his feet! When the wretch beheld the work of his iniquity, he was seized with distraction—and, drawing a dagger from his bosom, he plunged it into his own false heart, and lay stretched by the side of the lovely blossom he had so basely destroyed. On the morrow the traveller through the lane passed over a beautiful little stream, the emblem of innocence—and saw a dark stone, the appropriate symbol of hardened wickedness, with drops of blood trickling from its heart into the bosom of that pure limpid stream! From that day the little stream has lived in its untainted purity, and the stone has still continued its sacrifice of blood!

This legend has, perhaps naturally, raised a local spectre. At the dreary hour of midnight a terrific object has been seen lingering about the spot. He first took his station upon the bleeding stone; but from this apparently rightful possession he was ousted, some years ago, by the father of the present lord of the manor (by-the-bye, a

relative of mine by marriage, but he does not inherit the heart of any wicked ancestor), who removed the mysterious stone to his own premises, to satisfy the timid minds of his neighbours. The stone, however, still continued to bleed, and I believe it oozes forth its crimson drops even to the present day. Its removal did not remove or intimidate the spectre. He has since visited the lane, and the adjoining meadow, through which is a footpath to the village. Connected with this alarming midnight visitor, I remember a circumstance related to me by those who were actually acquainted with the facts, and with the person to whom they refer. An inhabitant of Buckland, who had attended Reigate Market and become exceedingly intoxicated, was joked by a companion upon the subject of "Buckland Shag" (the name by which the goblin is familiarly called—as he has generally appeared in the shape of a four-footed beast with a shaggy coat); whereupon, being pot-valiant, he laid a wager that if Shag appeared in his path that night he would fight him with his trusty hawthorn. With this promise he set forth, and arrived at the hour of midnight in the meadow. The spectre stood in his path—in his thoughtless fit of drunkenness he raised his stick and struck with all his strength; but it made no impression—nor did the goblin move. The stick fell as upon a blanket (so the man described it), and he instantly became sober, while a cold tremor ran through every nerve of his athletic frame. He hurried on, and the spectre followed! He hastened to the end of the meadow, and passed over a stile—the spectre followed at his heels! He had yet two fields to cross, and he went quickly forward—still the mysterious being followed! At length he arrived at his own door—then, and not till then, the spectre vanished, and the poor affrighted man fell in a state of complete exhaustion upon the threshold of his cottage. He was carried to his bed, and from that bed he never rose again—he died in a week! Such is the account related to me as perfectly correct. I have seen the cottage, and frequently heard the tale from persons whose veracity I have no reason to doubt. It is by no means unreasonable to believe that an affright of such a nature, powerfully operating upon the imagination, might produce such fatal effects.

Those who have wandered through the thousand tales of ghosts and hobgoblins will recollect that horses are endowed with a wonderful quickness of sight on these mysterious occasions, and that, when their visionary powers are attracted by supernatural appearances, they instantly lose their courage, their muscular strength, and all the energies of their noble nature. About twenty-six years ago (I was then living near the spot), a team of four horses had been from Reigate to Dorking with a load of corn. They were returning in the night, and about midnight were passing through Buckland Lane with the empty waggon. When they came to the bleeding-stone and the little stream, they suddenly stopped. The waggoners cheered, and whipped,

and even "put their shoulders to the wheel," in vain—nothing could prevail upon the horses to draw the empty waggon over the stream, although its width was not more than two feet, and its depth would not even reach their fetlocks! They stood trembling in every limb, and perspiring from every pore, with evident fear and agony. What they saw was never correctly ascertained, but it was easy for their biped companions to *guess*—"it stood to reason," they said, that they must have seen *something*; and who that knows anything of "haunted streams," can question the fact? The horses were taken from the vehicle, after two hours' delay, and were at length persuaded to walk home without it. When the next morning's sun had glistened upon the little stream, and the night-spell had thus been broken, one horse drew away with ease the waggon that four were unable to move in the preceding night. Who can doubt the power of the midnight spectre!

W. HERSEE.

[1842, *Part I.*, pp. 41, 42.]

CHRISTMAS CUSTOMS IN MONMOUTHSHIRE.

At Christmas there is a custom in the neighbourhood of Monmouth of carrying round from house to house the Merry Lewid. This is a representation, generally very well executed, of the head and neck of a white horse. The neck has some black stripes on it, so as to bear some resemblance to a zebra, and from it depends a sheet, beneath which is a man carrying the Merry Lewid elevated on a pole. The pole, swayed backwards and forwards, gives the movements of a prancing and rearing horse.

The etymology of the name I am not Welchman enough to discover; but some of your more learned readers may be able to enlighten me. I suspect the latter word to be a corruption of *loyd*, which means *grey*, I believe; and the former, from the mirth occasioned to the actors, a corrupt application of an understood term to express some word of similar sound, the meaning of which was unknown to the Sassenachs of Monmouth.

But no custom ever more fully exemplified the fable of the boys and the frogs. On one occasion, after a ring of the door-bell in the evening of Christmas Day, I heard some alarm and confusion in the hall; and going hastily out, saw what was really startling enough to anyone, much more so to a stranger, as the servant was. In the doorway, with the outline well defined in the strong moonlight, stood erect a great white horse, furiously tossing his head about. Whatever fun, therefore, the boys may derive, you may well imagine, Mr. Urban, that strangers, particularly females, would be very much alarmed thereat.

I find, in Sir H. Ellis's edition of "Brand's Antiquities," mention of the hobby-horse at Christmas, as follows, p. 269. "He (Weston)

tooke upon him to controll and finde fault with this and that, as the coming into the hall of *the hobby-horse in Christmas*;" and again, in the account of the "Lord of Misrule," p. 273: "Thinges sette in order, they have *their hobbie horses* and dragons, and other antiques, together with their pipers and thunderyng drummers to strike up the deville's daunce withall. Then marche these heathen companie . . . *their hobbie horses*, and other monsters, skyrnishyng amongst the throng." At p. 266, in a "Christmas carroll," enumerating the customs of that season, is the following quatrain:

"The wenches, with their wassell-bowles,
About the streets are singing;
The boyes are come to catch the owles,
The wild mare in is bringing."

There are also various allusions to the *shoeing of the wild mare*; but this, I apprehend, is a different custom altogether. There is no explanation of it given by Sir H. Ellis; but, if my boyish recollections be correct, this game is played by a number standing in a ring, holding hands, with one outside the ring, who drops a handkerchief behind anyone he pleases; and the point is, to be sharp in observing if it be dropped behind you, and then to be quick in overtaking the dropper before he arrives at your place—the only practical allusion to a horse being in the activity, as in these allusions in Sir Henry's notes, p. 268: "The adventurous youth shew their *agility* in shooting (qu. shoeing?) the wild mare;" and, p. 274, "Thus at *active* games and gambols of hot cockles, *shoeing the wild mare*, and the like harmless sports, the night was spent."

At the risk of being thought tedious, I will mention another custom of the same neighbourhood. On New Year's Day the little boys carry in their hands, to excite the admiration and liberality of their richer neighbours, pretty devices, made and adorned in the following way. A strip of deal stands perpendicularly, being, as it were, the stem of a tree. From this, at intervals, other pieces branch off horizontally; the extremities of these branches are adorned with apples—some gilded, some covered with silver tissue, some with flour, and stuck over with black and white oats, arranged in different figures. The whole is surmounted by a branch of the box-tree, to the leaves of which are attached hazel-nuts, by inserting the leaf into the smaller end of the nut, which is slightly opened, and which immediately collapses. The whole has the appearance of a gay and pretty shrub, and makes a rattling noise when moved by the clashing of the nuts.

There seem to be allusions to this custom in the notes to New Year's Day, pp. 8, 9; a gilded apple and black oats being very good substitutes for oranges and cloves. "An orange stuck with cloves appears to have been a New Year's gift. So Ben Jonson, in his Christmas Masque: 'He has an orange and rosemary, but not a

clove to stick in it.'” And among “Merry Observations upon every Month and every remarkable Day throughout the whole Year,” under January, it is said, “On the first day of this month will be given many gifts. . . . Children, to their inexpressible joy, will be drest in their best bibs and aprons, and may be seen handed along streets, some bearing Kentish pippins, others oranges stuck with cloves, in order to crave a blessing of their godfathers and godmothers.”

Should the above appear worthy of your Magazine, I may, in the following month, trouble you with some notices of old customs, and matters of ancient faith, which still linger amongst the country people of this vicinity.

Yours, etc., WM. DYKE.

[1842, *Part I.*, pp. 388, 389.]

THE MERRY LEWID.

Believing that Mr. Dyke's remarks, in your January number, on the custom said to prevail in the neighbourhood of Monmouth, of carrying round a horse's head under the name of the Merry Lewid, may admit of a simple explanation, I venture to offer the following observations.

It is described as the head and neck of a white horse, with zebra-like stripes of black. This mixture of black and white may have been originally intended for the grey colour, which in Welsh is *llwyd* (pronounced lewid); and the word *march* (pronounced markh) signifying a male horse, seems to me very easily corrupted into 'marry' or 'merry'; and thus the words correspond with the fact of its being a representation of a grey horse's head, etc.

With regard to the origin of the custom, it must remain, I suppose, a doubtful question; but I suspect it takes its rise in a source of heraldic chivalry, based upon the mythology of very ancient date. Three white horses' heads erased, two and one, on a sable shield, were borne by Cadell Deyrnllug, first king of Powys, as his family arms (for the arms of the state, according to Warrington, were a lion rampant); and I believe are borne by some of his descendants to this day.

Now, it is very possible that some may have borne reins on these horses' necks, which may have misled some heraldic painters to represent them as striped, till they got blazoned as bendy sinister argent and sable, which would have just the effect of these zebra heads.

Yours, etc., WM. HORTON LLOYD.

[1843, *Part I.*, pp. 22-24.]

As the subject of the “horse's head” or “merry llwyd” has lately been discussed in your pages, I beg to furnish an instance of it, which none of your correspondents have yet adduced. In the “Personal Recollections” of Charlotte Elizabeth (an interesting volume on many accounts) there is a description of the great festival of the

Irish peasantry, St. John's Eve, which the authoress witnessed in King's County :

"It is the custom at sunset on that evening to kindle numerous immense fires throughout the country, built, like our bonfires, to a great height, the pile being composed of turf, bogwood, and such other combustibles as they can gather. The turf yields a steady substantial body of fire, the bogwood a most brilliant flame; and the effect of these great beacons blazing on every hill, sending up volumes of smoke from every point of the horizon, is very remarkable. . . . But something was to follow that puzzled me not a little; when the fire had burned for some hours and got low, an indispensable part of the ceremony commenced. Every one present of the peasantry passed through it, and several children were thrown across the sparkling embers, while a wooden frame of some eight feet long, with a horse's head fixed to one end, and a large white sheet thrown over it, concealing the wood and the man on whose head it was carried, made its appearance. This was greeted with loud shouts of 'The white horse!' and, having been safely carried by the skill of its bearer several times through the fire with a bold leap, it pursued the people, who ran screaming and laughing in every direction. I asked what the horse was meant for, and was told it represented all cattle."—Pp. 105, 107.

Persons who have seen "Merry" or "Merrick Llwyd," in Monmouthshire, will at once recognise the justness of the description, "a wooden frame (pole) of some eight feet long, with a horse's head fixed to one end, and a large white sheet thrown over it, concealing the wood and the man on whose head it was carried." I do not, however, imagine that the horse's head is used in Wales with any lustral or piacular intention, as appears to be the case at the Irish festival. How far this signification is still understood by the persons who practise the ceremony, it may be difficult to say. Such usages often linger in popular habits and customs long after their original meaning is exploded.

Be this as it may, it is curious to find an Irish custom explained in the writings of a Jewish rabbi, a circumstance which widely opens the door to conjecture. Maimonides, in his "More Nevochim," or "Instructor of the Perplexed," has a passage on the subject of passing through the fire, which explains the quotation given above with sufficient clearness.

"In enumerating the things against which we are thus warned, it is important to remark that the advocates of those opinions which are destitute of foundation or utility, in order to confirm their superstitions, and to induce belief in them, artfully intimate that those who do not perform the actions by which their superstitions are confirmed are always punished by some misfortune or other; and therefore, when any evil accidentally happens, they extol such actions or rather superstitions as they wish to practise, hoping thereby to induce him to embrace their opinions. Thus, since it is well known, from the very nature of man, that there is nothing of which men are more afraid than of the loss of their property and children, therefore the worshippers of fire declared and circulated the opinion, that, if they did not cause their sons or daughters to pass through the fire, all their children would die; there can be no doubt, therefore, but that every one would hasten diligently to perform it, both from their great love to their children, and fear of losing them, and because of the facility of the art, nothing more being required than to lead the child through the fire, the performance of which was

rendered still more probable by the children being committed to the care of the women, of whose intellectual weakness and consequent credence in such things no one is ignorant. Hence the Scripture vehemently opposes the action, and uses such arguments against it as against no other kind of idolatry whatever: 'He hath given of his seed to Moloch, to defile my sanctuary, and to profane my Holy Name' (Levit. xx. 3). Moses therefore declares in the name of God, that, by that very act by which they expected to preserve the life of their children, by that act they shall destroy it; because God will exterminate both him who commits the crime, and also his family: 'I will set my face against that man, and against his family, and will cut him off' (Lev. xx. 5). Nevertheless, traces of this species of superstition are still existing; for we see midwives take new-born children wrapped in swaddling clothes, and wave them to and fro in the smoke of herbs of an unpleasant odour thrown into the fire,—a relict, no doubt, of this passing through the fire, and one which ought not to be suffered. From this we may discover the perverse cunning of those men who propagated and established their error with such persuasive energy, that, although it has been combated by the law for more than two thousand years, yet vestiges of it are still remaining."—Townley's "Maimonides," pp. 209-211.*

The origin of this practice may obviously be traced to the fact of the atmosphere's being purified by fire, and infectious disorders thereby kept off. The next step, which was from truth to superstition, would be to suppose that fire would act as a preventive by anticipation. Afterwards ensued those horrid practices of burning children in the fires of Moloch, with which every reader of the Carthaginian history is familiar. (See particularly the articles "Moloch" and "Tophet" in the "Dictionnaire Mythologique" of M. Noël, 2 vols. 8vo. Paris, 1823, 4th edition.)

Arthur Young (father of the celebrated agriculturist) has collected several classical illustrations of this practice, in his work on "Idolrous Corruptions in Religion," p. 117, and the passage is given at length by Mr. Townley, p. 360, note xl, without, however, correcting the slight mistake of "the Council of Trullo" to *in* Trullo, as he might have done. Mr. Townley also notices similar customs at Athens, in Scotland in the time of James I. (or 6th. in the Scottish succession), and in Cornwall; but without adverting to that in Ireland. M. de Sainmore, in his "Histoire de Russie" (written to accompany the plates of M. David), mentions this practice as still existing in Russia, when speaking of the idol *Koupalo*. [See note 25.]

"Le temple de ce dieu étoit au milieu des campagnes. Il étoit représenté debout sur un piédestal, tenant entre ses mains une espèce de corne remplie de fleurs et de fruits. C'étoit la divinité de l'abondance; on l'imploroit au milieu des plaisirs, de la joie et des festins. On célébroit sa fête vers le commencement de l'été, c'est-à-dire, le 24 Juin, précisément le même jour et presque de la même manière que nous célébrons la fête de St. Jean-Baptiste. De jeunes garçons et de jeunes filles parés de guirlandes de fleurs, la tête couronnée de feuilles nouvelles, formoient des chœurs de danse et sautoient légèrement par-dessus les feux qu'on

* The title of this compendious volume is, "The Reasons of the Laws of Moses, from the *Mora Nevuchini* of Maimonides," by James Townley, D.D., author of "Illustrations of Biblical Literature." Lond., 1827, pp. 451.

avoit allumés. On n'entendoit partout que les expressions de la joie et du bonheur, et le nom de KOUPALO étoit mille fois répété dans des chansons.

"Le peuple slave conserve encore, en quelques lieux, l'usage de cette fête. On passe dans les festins la nuit qui précède le jour de la fête. On allume des feux de joie, et l'on danse autour. Le bas peuple, en plusieurs endroits, appelle KOU-PALNITSA, du nom de cette Divinité, Sainte-Agrippine, qu'on invoque le même jour."*—Vol. i., p. 9.

M. Noël, in his "Mythological Dictionary" already referred to, says (art. "Feu"),

"Le feu est une des principales divinités des Tartares idolâtres. Ils ne se laissent point aborder par des étrangers, sans que ceux-ci se soient purifiés en passant entre deux feux."

And under the same head he observes of the Virginians (who seem to have carried this superstition to the greatest extreme),

"Quand ces peuples reviennent de quelque expédition militaire, on qu'ils se soient heureusement tirés de quelque péril imminent, ils allument un grand feu, et temoignent leur joie en dansant à l'entour avec une gourde ou une sonnette à la main, comme s'ils rendaient grâces à cet élément de leur avoir sauvé la vie."

He remarks (art. "Pyromantie"),

"Quelques auteurs mettent au nombre des espèces de pyromantie l'abominable coutume qu'avaient certains peuple orientaux de faire passer leurs enfants par le feu en l'honneur de Moloch. *Delrio* y comprend aussi la superstition de ceux qui examinaient les symptômes des feux allumés la veille de la Saint Jean-Baptiste, et la coutume de danser à l'entour, ou de sauter par-dessus."

Arthur Young has referred, in illustration of these practices, to Virgil, *Æn.* xi. 785-9; see also a note in the Oxford edition of that classic, 1820 (an edition attributed to Dr. Pett, of Christ Church.)

I will only add, that, as the horse's head represents all cattle in Ireland, the obvious explanation is, that it appears as a substitute for them, and that the supposed benefit is derived to them through it as their representative.

Yours, etc., CYDWELL.

[1824, Part II., pp. 587-590.]

CHRISTMAS FESTIVALS.

On the introduction of Christianity into the world, and its civil establishment in the fourth century, the festivals held in honour of Bacchus and other heathen deities at this season of the year gradually fell into decay. The primitive teachers of the Christian religion prohibited these scenes of festivity, as being unsuited to the sacred character of their Divine Founder; but on the formation of a regular hierarchy, supported by political power, the introduction of particular

* The Abbé Périn, in his "Abrégé de l'Histoire de Russie" (I. xxiii.) translates the name Koupalo, *le baigneur*, and accounts for it by bathing in the rivers commencing at that time of year. He calls Saint Agrippina by the double name of Agrippina Koupalnitsa, which he says is given to keep up the claims of Koupalo, though virtually supplanted by the other.

festivals, adapted to the respective periods of the Pagan ones, soon became general. Thus by adopting the obsolete feasts of the Greeks and Romans, and adapting them to the most striking events in the lives of the great Founder of Christianity and His followers, the prejudices of the Pagan worshippers were shaken, and numerous converts obtained. Unfortunately these Festival and Saint days at length became so numerous under the papal authority, that the days of the year were not sufficiently numerous for their celebration. However, since the Reformation, the far greater portion have sunk into oblivion, and are only known by referring to the old calendars of the Saints. Yet the principal ones, commemorated in honour of Christ, are still retained, though not celebrated with the same festivity and show as in former times. Among these, *Christmas Day*, as being the reputed birth-day of our Saviour, may be considered the most important; and here we shall notice its introduction into the country, and some of the peculiar traits of its celebration.

The first festival of this kind ever held in Britain, it is said, was celebrated by King Arthur in the city of York, A.D. 521.* Previously to this year, the 25th of December was dedicated to Satan, or to the heathen deities worshipped during the dynasties of the British, Saxon, and Danish Kings. In the year 521, this chivalrous Monarch gained the sanguinary battle on Badon Hills, when 90,000 of the enemy were slain, and the city of York immediately delivered up to him. He took up his winter quarters at York, and there held the festival of Christmas. The churches which lay levelled to the ground he caused to be re-built, and the vices attendant on heathenish feasts were banished from York for ever. This glorious example was soon followed. York served as a beacon of light to the whole empire. The festival of Christmas soon became general, and a moral and religious nation soon succeeded to a Bacchanalian and idolatrous race.

As if in memory of its origin in this county, Yorkshire seems to preserve the festivities of Christmas with more splendour and ancient hospitality than any other part of Great Britain. The din of preparation commences some weeks before, and its sports and carousals generally continue beyond the first month of the new year.

The first intimation of Christmas, in Yorkshire, is by what are there called *vessel-cup singers*, generally poor old women, who, about three weeks before Christmas, go from house to house, with a waxen or wooden doll, fantastically dressed, and sometimes adorned with an orange, or a fine rosy-tinged apple. With this in their hands, they sing or chant an old carol, of which the following homely stanza forms a part:

* The observation of this day became general in the Catholic Church about the year 500; and was so named from *Christi missa*, or mass of Christ.

"God bless the master of this house,
The mistress also,
And all the little children
That round the table go!"

The image of the child is, no doubt, intended to represent the infant Saviour; and the vessel-cup is, most probably, the remains of the *wassail bowl*, which anciently formed a part of the festivities of this season of the year.

Another custom, which commences at the same time as the vessel-cup singing, is that of the poor of the parish visiting all the neighbouring farmers to beg corn, which is invariably given to them, in the quantity of a full pint, at least, to each. This is called *mumping*, as is the custom which exists in Bedfordshire, of the poor begging the broken victuals the day after Christmas Day.

Christmas Eve is, in Yorkshire, celebrated in a peculiar manner. At eight o'clock in the evening, the bells greet "old Father Christmas" with a merry peal, the children parade the streets with drums, trumpets, bells, or perhaps, in their absence, with the poker and shovel, taken from their humble cottage fire; the yule candle is lighted and

"—— High on the cheerful fire
Is blazing seen th' enormous Christmas brand."

Supper is served, to which one dish, from the lordly mansion to the humblest shed, is, invariably, *furmety*; yule-cake, one of which is always made for each individual in the family, and other more substantial viands, are also added. Poor Robin, in his Almanack for the year 1676 (speaking of the winter quarter), says, "and lastly, who would but praise it, because of Christmas, when good cheer doth so abound, as if all the world were made of mince-pies, plum-pudding, and *furmety*." And Brand says, "on the night of this eve our ancestors were wont to light candles of an enormous size, called Christmas candles." To enumerate all the good cheer which is prepared at this festival is by no means necessary. In Yorkshire, the Christmas pie is still a regular dish, and is regularly served to the higher-class of visitants, while the more humble ones are tendered yule-cake, or bread and cheese, in every house which they enter during the twelve days of Christmas. The Christmas pie is one of the good old dishes still retained at a Yorkshire table.* It is not of modern invention. Allan Ramsay, in his poems, tells us, that among other baits by which the good ale-wife drew customers to her house, there never failed to them,

"Ay at yule whene'er they came,
A braw goose-pie."

* The *Sheffield Iris* mentions a colossal Christmas pie, prepared for a convivial party by Mr. Roberts, in Fargate, which consisted of 56 lb. of flour, 30 rabbits, 43 lb. of pork, 12 lb. of veal, and 20 lb. of butter, pepper, etc. The weight was 13 st. 13 lb. [See *ante*, p. 77.]

And the intelligent and close observer of our customs, Misson, in his travels in England, says, " Dans toutes les familles on fait à Noël un fameux paté qu'on appelle le paté de Noël. C'est une grande science que la composition de ce paté ; c'est un docte hachis de langue de bœuf, de blanc de volaille, d'œufs, de sucre, des raisins de Corinthe, d'écorce de citron et d'orange, de diverses sortes d'épicerie," etc.

Of the *Christmas Plays* anciently performed at this season, some remains still exist in the West of England, particularly in Cornwall ; but the representation of these dramatic exhibitions is almost wholly confined to children, or very young persons. The actors are fantastically dressed, decorated with ribands and painted paper, and have wooden swords, and all the equipage necessary to support the several characters they assume. To entertain their auditors, they learn to repeat a barbarous jargon in the form of a drama, which had been handed down from distant generations. War and Love are the general topics ; and St. George and The Dragon are always the most prominent characters. Interlude, expostulation, debate, battle, and death, are sure to find a place among this mimicry ; but a physician, who is always at hand, immediately restores the dead to life. [See *ante*, p. 79.]

It is generally understood that these Christmas Plays derived their origin from the ancient Crusades ; and hence the feats of chivalry, and the romantic extravagance of knight-errantry, that are still preserved in all the varied pretensions and exploits.

Popular superstitions and customs may generally be traced to heathen times ; " for on their rites and mysteries were many of the Catholic ceremonies afterwards engrafted, and to the saturnalia we are, or rather our ancestors were, probably indebted for some of our Christmas pastimes." The Reformation first injured their popularity, and the age of Puritanism gave them a fresh shock. It was even ordered by Parliament, December 24, 1652, " that no observation shall be had of the five-and-twentieth day of December, commonly called Christmas Day ; nor any solemnity used or exercised in churches upon that day in respect thereof." They now appear to be neglected in society in proportion to its degree of polish, and in the metropolis and its immediate neighbourhood are but little encouraged by the higher classes, and but partially by the middling-ranks, while among the lower portion of the people they frequently degenerate into debauchery ; though in the far western and northern counties, Christmas is yet kept up with much spirit ; the yule-log still crackles on the hearth, and the sirloins of beef, the minced pies, the plum porridge, the capons, turkeys, geese, and plum puddings, smoke upon the hospitable board. Each master of a family, like the old courtier in the ballad, appears to have

' A good old fashion, when Christmase *is* come,
To call in all his old neighbours with bagpipe and drum,
With good cheer enough to furnish every old room,
And old liquor able to make a cat speak and man dumb.'

It is true that certain strolling minstrels still occasionally disturb our nocturnal slumbers for a few weeks previous to Christmas, calling themselves *waites*; "but, alas! alack the day! instead of playing and singing the good old carol, our ears are saluted with 'Roy's Wife,' 'St. Patrick's Day,' or the latest quadrille tune. In many parts of the country, especially in the west, the carol is still preserved, and is sung in the parish churches on Christmas Day, the singers also going about to the different houses, blithely carolling such cheering tunes as, 'A Child this day is born;' 'Sit you, merry gentlemen;' 'I saw three ships sailing in,' etc. In London, except some croaking ballad-singer bawling out, 'God rest you, merry gentlemen,' or a like doggrel, nothing in the shape of carols is heard, though there is a considerable sale of them among the lower classes."*

Burton, in his "Anatomy of Melancholy," gives the following list of Christmas amusements, which are now almost superseded by Pope Joan, Blind Man's Buff, etc.: "The ordinary recreations which we have in winter are, cards, table and dice, shovel board, cheese play, the philosopher's game, small trunkes, billiards, musicke, maskes, singing, dancing, ule-games, catches, purposes, questions, merry tales of errant knights, kings, queens, lovers, lords, ladies, giants, dwarfs, thieves, fairies, goblins, friars, witches, and the rest."

"As to mummers, and Christmas plays, unless Grimaldi and the pantomimes be considered as relics, we know not where to find them in or near the metropolis, though formerly a Lord of Misrule, or Christian Prince, was chosen, even in the highest families and most learned establishments; even our kings used to join in these sports. Mummers, guisardes or guise-dances, commonly called geese-dances, may yet be seen in the country."†

A description of *mummers*, desirous of renewing the Christmas festivals, lately presented themselves in the neighbourhood of Williams-town, in the Sister Island; but, it appears, instead of inspiring gaiety, they excited considerable alarm. They consisted of fifteen young men, grotesquely attired, in ribands, white shirts outside their clothes, papers and rosettes in their hats, and large sashes round their waists; and one was dressed in woman's clothes; two of them carried swords of a very antient appearance; the remainder had sticks. Being noticed by the police landing from a boat, peace-officer Sharpley proceeded to interrogate them; and considering it necessary to prevent such a formidable body from perambulating the district, immediately despatched a messenger to Mr. Goodison, of the College Street Office, who directed peace-officer Campaign and his party to proceed to Williams-town, when they took the whole number into custody as suspicious characters going through the country disguised. They were brought before Mr. Alderman Fleming and Sir Garret Neville, when one of them, Michael Darley, who stated himself to be the king of the party,

* "Time's Telescope," 1825 [p. 319].

† *Ibid* [pp. 319, 320].

said, that they came from Raheny, and that they had been out on the Christmas gambols since St. Stephen's Day; that hearing there were a number of gentlemen's seats at the side of the water, he and his subjects undertook a voyage across the bay, to visit the shore of Williamstown and its vicinity. On being asked by Sir Garret Neville where they got the swords, he said he got one from a man of the name of Neill, gardener to Mr. Joy, and the other from a person at Raheny, and that their intentions were entirely harmless; they assembled for the purpose of getting Christmas boxes, according to an ancient custom (in his dominions) at the other side of the water; and that the King and Hector (one of his guards) were always armed with swords. To a question by the magistrates, he said he was an historian, and his fool was treasurer, and carried a bladder fixed to a long pole; the party spent whatever they got in drinking, dancing, and other amusements. They got money from Dean Ponsonby, Dean Gore, and many other gentlemen. "His majesty" referred to Counsellor Casey for a character. The magistrates, after a severe admonition, had them detained for further examination.*

IIAN.

[1828, pp. 505-508.]

Like many of our ancient customs, the celebration of Christmas, according to the manner of our Mediæval ancestors, is rapidly falling into decay in the Metropolis and all the larger cities and towns of the empire, where the festivities at this period of the year bear little resemblance to those of olden time, when the "busy housewife" was usually engaged for weeks in the din of preparation before this festal season arrived. In the villages, however, and less populous places of the kingdom, where there is not so much diversity of life to engage or amuse the mind, the spirit of ancient Christmas still remains. Among our agricultural classes in particular, who at this season enjoy a kind of respite from their annual labours, Christmas appears to be peculiarly grateful; and young and old seem to be inspired with the love of mirth and domestic jollity. With them the celebration of Christmas has undergone little variation. Though the forms, wherever refinement prevails, are occasionally different, still the spirit by which this annual rejoicing is actuated, is nearly the same all over England.

Our ancestors considered Christmas in the double light of a holy commemoration and a cheerful festival; and accordingly distinguished it by vacation from business, merriment, and hospitality. They seemed eagerly bent on making themselves and every one around them happy. The great hall resounded with the tumultuous joys of servants and tenants, and the gambols they played served as amusement to the master of the mansion and his family.

Ben Jonson has given us a curious epitome of these revels in his

* *Freeman's Journal.*

"Masque of Christmas," where he has personified the season and its attributes. The characters introduced in this farce are Misrule, Carol, Mince-Pie, Gamboll, Post and Pair, New Year's Gift, Mumming, Wassall Offering, and Babie-Coche. Of the conviviality which reigned at this time of the year, a correct estimate may be formed from a few lines by the author of the "Hesperides," who, in addressing a friend [Sir Simeon Steward] at Christmas, makes the following request:—

"When your faces shine
With bucksome meate and capring wine,
Remember us in cups full crown'd,
* * * * *
Untill the fired chestnuts leape
For joy to see the fruits ye reape
From the plumpe chalice, and the cup
That tempts till it be tossed up
* * * * * carouse
Till Liber Pater twirles the house
About your ears. * * * * *
And to the bag-pipe all addresse,
Till sleep takes place of wearinesse:
And thus throughout with Christmas playes
Frolick the full twelve holydayes."

It is to rustic life we must now look for what remains of the customs practised by our ancestors during this season. There the relics of many of these unobjectionable frolics still remain. The North has its "fool's plough," and the people of Cornwall their "goose dances." The latter continue to exhibit a hunch-a-back man, called the "King of Christmas," and sometimes the Father; and customs not very dissimilar may be traced at the present moment in several other countries.

In London and all commercial towns the observances of "Auld lang syne" are much sooner forgotten than in the country; but even in these crowded marts we still meet with remnants of Christmas Gambols. In the pantomimic representations we have shews typical of the ancient Christmas Masques. Blind man's Buff, Hunt the Slipper, the Game of Goose, Snap Dragon, Push Pin, and dancing, form the amusements of the younger part of the assemblage; whilst cards occupy the elders.

The Yule Clogs and Christmas Candles have, it is true, given way in many instances to blazing coal fires and lights of more moderate dimensions; but the rites, religious and festive, of Christmas Eve, still continue to be as regularly performed as ever. We have no longer the Yule Song or the Yule Cakes; but then we have Carols and Mince-pies; and though the latter are not usually embossed with the figures of the Saviour, we do not fail to remember the religious origin of the ceremonial which has led to their manufacture.*

* There is little doubt but that Christmas and its accompanying festivities were originally derived from the classical Pagans. Benson, in his "Chronology," says

We do not certainly contribute, as in days of yore, our Christmas Boxes to furnish our more indigent brethren with the means of obtaining from the Clergy absolution for the offences of the past year;* but we bestow them still in order to enable them to procure for themselves and their families, a good joint and a pudding for Christmas Day. Neither do we keep open house for the reception of the lame, the halt, and the blind; yet they are not wholly neglected on these occasions. They are, we believe, usually furnished with coals and blankets, to enable them to meet the inclemencies of the winter season; and, in lieu of being provided with the means of indulging in one or two days' drunkenness and debauchery, receive, in most places, an addition to their comforts of a more lasting and solid

that Christ was not born at this season of the year, but probably in April or May, of the Julian year 1709 (the present date being merely that of tradition), or nearly four years before the vulgar era: yet Christmas Day, which is really uncertain, we have made certain; while Good Friday, which is certain, is made of varying date. The most ancient author whom we find using the modern mode of dating, *Anno Domini*, is the venerable Bede, who published his "Ecclesiastical History" in 751. It was adopted in France under King Pepin, and fully established in the reign of Charlemagne.

* *Christmas Boxes* may be assimilated to, and probably originated from, the Roman Paganalia, which were instituted by Servius Tullius, and celebrated in the beginning of the year. An altar was erected in every village, where persons gave money. The apprentices' boxes were formerly made of pottery; and Aubrey mentions a pot in which Roman denarii were found, resembling in appearance an apprentice's earthen Christmas-box. Count Caylus gives two of these Paganalian boxes; one exhibiting Ceres seated between two figures standing, the other with a head of Hercules. The heathen plan was commuted in the Middle Age to collections for masses, in order to absolve the debaucheries of the seasons, which servants were unable to pay. The Romish Priests had Masses said for almost everything: if a ship went out to the Indies, the Priests had a Box in her, under the protection of some Saint: and for Masses, as their cant was, to be said for them to that saint, etc., the poor people must put in something into the Priest's Box, which was not opened till the ship's return. The Mass at that time was called Christ-mass: the Box called Christ-mass Box, or money gathered against that time, that Masses might be made by the Priests to the Saints to forgive the people the debaucheries of that time: and from this, servants had the liberty to get box money, that they too might be enabled to pay the Priest for his Masses, knowing well the truth of the proverb, "No Penny, no Pater Nosters." "The Christmas Box," says the author of the "Connoisseur," "was formerly the bounty of well-disposed people, who were willing to contribute something towards rewarding the industrious, and supplying them with necessaries. But the gift is now almost demanded as a right; and our journeymen, apprentices, etc., are grown so polite, that instead of reserving their Christmas Box for its original use, their ready cash serves them only for pocket-money; and instead of visiting their friends and relations, they commence the fine gentleman of the week." The bestowing of Christmas Boxes, indeed, is one of those absurd customs of antiquity which, till within these few years, had spread itself almost into a national grievance. The butcher and the baker sent their journeymen and apprentices to levy contributions on their customers, who were paid back again in fees to the servants of the different families. The tradesman had, in consequence, a pretence to lengthen out his bill, and the master and mistress to lower the wages on account of the vails.

description than a few hours' wassail and merriment could possibly afford them.

The noisy revels by which our ancestors were wont to distinguish themselves at Christmas, have now given place to mere family parties, certainly as happy, though perhaps less jovial than those of which they are the archetypes.

Other changes have sprung up during the last century, which have conduced in some measure to abridge the innocent pleasures of this festiuous portion of the year. The following good old Christmas song, preserved in "Poor Robin's" Almanack for 1695, is, however, quite as applicable now as at the time it was written, though methodism and cant may unite in condemning the sentiments it conveys :

A CHRISTMAS SONG.

" Now thrice welcome, Christmas,
Which brings us good cheer,
Minc'd pies and plumb-porridge,
Good ale and strong beer ;
With pig, goose, and capon,
The best that may be,
So well doth the weather
And our stomachs agree.

" Observe how the chimneys
Do smoak all about,
The cooks are providing
For dinner, no doubt ;
But those on whose tables
No victuals appear,
O may they keep Lent
All the rest of the year !

" With holly and ivy
So green and so gay ;
We deck up our houses
As fresh as the day,
With bays and rosemary,
And lawrel compleat,
And every one now
Is a king in conceit.

* * * *

" But as for curmudgeons,
Who will not be free,
I wish they may die
On the three-legged tree."

Notwithstanding the changes which have taken place in our Christmas observances, the same spirit of benevolence and earnest desire to see all our poorer dependants happy about us, still exists with little or no diminution ; and there still continues, at this season of the year, a disposition to works of charity and beneficence ; which the selfish refinements of modern manners will, we trust, never entirely dissipate.

In the principal cities and towns on the Continent and Peninsula, the festival of Christmas, as in England, is much altered in its ceremonies ; but in the country towns, a similar spirit to the days of old is still retained.

In the North of Germany there is a Christmas custom described by Coleridge, which cannot be too strongly recommended and encouraged in our own country. The children make little presents to their parents, and to each other ; and the parents to their children. For three or four months before Christmas the girls are all busy, and the boys save up their pocket-money to buy these presents. What the present is to be is cautiously kept secret. On the evening before Christmas Day, one of the parlours is lighted up by the children, into which the parents must not go ; a great yew bough is fastened on the table at a little distance from the wall, a multitude of little tapers are fixed in the bough, but not so as to burn it till they are nearly consumed ; and coloured paper, etc., hangs and flutters from the twigs. Under this bough the children lay out in great order the presents they mean for their parents, still concealing in their pockets what they intend for each other. Then the parents are introduced, and each presents his little gift ; they then bring out the remainder, one by one, from their pockets, and present them with kisses and embraces. On the next day, in the great parlour, the parents lay out on the table the presents for the children : a scene of more sober joy succeeds ; as on this day, after an old custom, the mother says privately to each of her daughters, and the father to his sons, that which he has observed most praiseworthy, and that which was most faulty in their conduct.

In the smaller towns and villages throughout North Germany (and formerly in the large towns and cities), these presents are sent by the parents to a man who, in high buskins, a white robe, a mask, and an enormous flax wig, personates Knecht Rupert, *i.e.* the Servant Rupert. On Christmas night he goes round to every house, and says, that Jesus Christ, his master, sent him thither. The parents and elder children receive him with great pomp and reverence, while the little ones are most terribly frightened. He then inquires for the children, and, according to the character which he hears from the parents, he gives them the intended presents, as if they came out of heaven from Jesus Christ. Or, if they should have been bad children, he gives the parents a rod, and, in the name of his Master, recommends them to use it frequently. About seven or eight years old the children are let into the secret, and it is curious how faithfully they keep it.

In Spain it was formerly a general custom, at Christmas, among people of family, to prepare for an almost public exhibition one or two rooms of the house, where, upon a clumsy imitation of rocks and mountains, a great number of baby-houses and clay figures, imitating the commonest actions of life, were placed amongst a multitude of lamps and tapers. A ruinous stable, surrounded by sheep and cattle,

was seen in the front of the room, with the figures of Joseph, Mary, and some shepherds, kneeling in adoration of the child in the manger—an act which an ass and an ox imitated with the greatest composure. This collection of puppets, called *nacimiento*, were made a pretext for collecting a large party, and passing several nights in dancing, etc. The room being illuminated after sunset, not only the friends of the family were entitled to enjoy the festivities of the evening, but any gentleman, giving his name at the door, might introduce one or more ladies, who, if but known by sight to the master of the house, would be requested to join in the amusements which followed. These were singing, dancing, and not unfrequently speeches taken from the old Spanish plays, and known by the name of *Relaciones*. Recitation was considered till lately as an accomplishment both in males and females; and persons who were known to be skilled in that art stood up, at the request of the company, to deliver a speech, with all the gesticulations of the old school, just as others gratified their friends by performing upon an instrument. A slight refreshment of the Christmas cakes called *oxaldres*, and sweet wines or home-made liqueurs, was enough to free the house from the imputation of meanness.

The present *nacimientos*, however, seldom afford amusement to strangers; and, with the exception of singing carols to the sound of the *zambomba*, little remains of the old festivities. This is general in most parts of Spain at this season, though never used at any other. A slender shoot of reed (*arundo donax*) is fixed in the centre of a piece of parchment, without perforating the skin, which, softened by moisture, is tied like a drumhead round the mouth of a large earthen jar. The parchment when dry acquires a great tension, and the reed being slightly covered with wax, allows the clenched hand to glide up and down, producing a deep hollow sound of the same kind as that which proceeds from the tambourine when rubbed with the middle finger.

IIAN.

[1790, Part I., p. 499.]

HAGMAN HEIGH.

In answer to Junius, concerning the origin of the expression "Hagman Heigh," as I do not know of any book that gives any account of it, I shall take the liberty of giving you what I believe to be the true meaning of it.

The month of December used formerly to be called *ἅγια μῆνη*, or *sacred month*, by the monks and friars; who used on the last day of the year to go about begging, reciting a kind of carol, at the close of every verse of which they introduced the expression of *ἅγια μῆνη*, alluding to the birth of our Saviour. In some parts of Scotland, and in the North of England, till very lately, it was customary for every-

body to make and receive presents amongst their friends on the eve of the new year, which present was called an *Hagmenay*, and is no other than a corruption of the ἁγία μὴνη.*

Yours, etc., NORTHUMBRIENSIS.

[1790, *Part II.*, p. 616.]

As a further explanation of *Hagmenai*, p. 499, you may add, that in Scotland, till very lately (if not in the present time), there was a custom of distributing sweet cakes, and a particular kind of sugared bread, for several days before and after the new year; and on the last night of the old year (peculiarly called *Hagmenai*) the visitors and company made a point of not separating till after the clock struck twelve, when they rose, and, mutually kissing each other, wished each other a happy new year. Children and others, for several nights, went about from house to house as *guisarts*, that is, disguised, or in masquerade dresses, singing—

“ Rise up, good wife, and be no’ swier (lazy),
To deal your bread as long’s you’re here;
The time will come when you’ll be dead,
And neither want nor meal nor bread.”

Some of those masquerades had a fiddle, and, when admitted into a house, entertained the company with a dramatic dialogue, partly *extempore*.

B. A.

Dec. 30th—Jan. 6th.

RELICK SUNDAY.

[1796, *Part I.*, pp. 292, 293.]

The learned editor of the “*Antiquitates Vulgares*” (Newcastle, 8vo, 1777) having omitted to say anything upon *Relick Sunday*, permit an occasional correspondent to lay a few observations upon the subject, together with some additions to his account of Easter, etc., before your numerous readers.

Amongst the Harl MSS., 2447, is a curious collection of antient Postills, or Homilies, written in the reigns of King Edward IV. and King Henry VII. at fol. 186 b. of which I find one, “*In festo Reliquiarum*,” beginning—

“ Worshipfull frendis, on Sunday next coming shall be the holy fest of all relyks (called *Relike Sondag*), that be left her’ in erth to the grete magnificence honor and worship of god and p’fite to man bothe bodily and gostily, for in as moch as we be in sufficient to worship and reu’ence singularly all reu’ent Reliks of all seynts left here in erth, for it passith man’s power. Wherefore holy Chirch in especiall the Chirch of Yngelonde hathe ordeynd this holy Fest to be worshipped the next sonday aft’ the translac’on of seint Thom’s of Cantirbery ye’rly to be halowed and had in reu’ence.”

* EBORACENSIS, who supposes it to proceed from the joy of hackers or cutters of wood used in heating ovens at Christmas, will be convinced that this is a more probable explanation.—EDITOR.

And, in an antient Account of Church Expences belonging to the Parish of St. Martin Outwich, is this entry :

"Anno 1525.
Payde for wyne on relykys Sondaye id."

Mr. Brand (App. p. 310) treats upon the Pasche *Eggs*, but seems to have forgotten the "*Paschall*" or hallowed taper used at this season of commemorating our Lord's death. Amongst the beforementioned homilies is one (fol. 92 b.): "*In vigilia Pashe*," wherein this curious custom at the Easter season is pleasingly obviated :

"Worshipfull Frendes; on Estern' Even' the Pascall is brought forth to be halowyd. It signifieth oure Sou'eyne Saviour' Criste J'h'u; for as the Pascall ys Candyll and Taper in the Chirche, so is Criste principall and chiefe aboue all Seynts in Heyne. The Pascall also signifieth the pillar of Fyre that yede before the Childrene of Israell when thei went oute of Egipt to the lond of p'mysson and bihest that now is called Jer'l'm and as thei yede thorough oute of the rede sce, dry fote, hole and sounde.—(Fol. 93.) Also the pascall is light wt the new hallowed Fyre, and then all other Tapers and Candills in the church be light with the same hallowed Fyre; for all holynes and light of gace and gode werks, com'yth of cists doctryne.—Also v pepyns of hallowed encense be sette in the pascall in crosse wise signifieth, as Bede seyth, the v p'cious wounds that crist suffred on his p'cious body."

And, in the curious MS. Account of Parishes Expences afore-quoted, is another entry, which may probably tend to the illustration of this singular paragraph :

"Anno 1525.
Payd to Thomas Vauce waxchandler for making and renewyng of the beme lyght and for makyng of the Paskall wt the tenabur candell and *crosse* candell xxs. and for waste of the same pascall a pownd and halfe qrt viijd."

And here, the peculiarity of the following specimens of Monkish logic, which appears towards the close of this homily, will doubtless apologise for the digression :

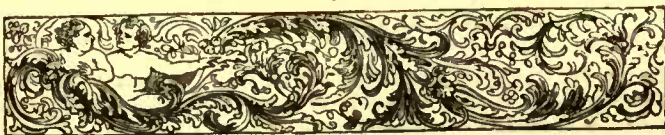
"Also at the fonte hallowyng the preste breethyth on the Water; For the Holi goste in making of the worlde was borne on the water; wherefore, Allmyghte god for Adam is syn cursed the erthe and spared the water (*Maledicta tr'a in op'e tuo. Genes. 30*). Therefore it is lefull to a man, for to ete in lent that com'yth of the wat'."

Should the above meet with your approbation, it may tempt me to continue the subject in some future numbers of your pleasing Miscellany.

Yours, etc, H. E.



Superstitious Customs and Beliefs.



SUPERSTITIOUS CUSTOMS AND BELIEFS.

Papal Superstitions.

[1826, *Part I.*, pp. 419-421.]

I N my last communication (p. 302), I presented you with some specimens of the delusions of the Church of Rome with regard to Demoniacism. [See note 26.] I will now instance two other old superstitions, 1. of the Devil creating storms of Thunder and Lightning, and the power of Saints, and Reliques of Saints, to appease the same; and 2. of treasures buried in the earth being guarded by evil spirits.

The first idea seems to have arisen from a wretched translation and explication of the oriental expressions, the *prince of darkness*; the *prince of the powers of the air*; attributing to the Devil the power to raise storms of wind and hail.

The witches, as is well-known, obtained of him a share in that controul; whence so much has been said of the old hags on the coast of Norway, who sell winds to the sailors; and it is no less notorious that the bells bear inscriptions relative to their efficacy in dispersing by their sacred peals these diabolical tempests, whence in some parts of Germany a storm-tithe still continues to be paid.

In fact it was an ancient relict of Paganism, when such old bel-dames as those of Norway used to dig a hole in the ground, and after muttering a miserable jargon, a horrid tempest of conflicting elements was to be brought on.

In the life of St. Hidulphus, the axiom, that the Devil is the author of thunder and hail-storms is not only adopted in the abstract, but it is completely described in all its circumstances; neither prayer, *Deum invocare*, nor any other means, will serve at all. For instance, once on the festival of St. Hidulphus, all of a sudden down comes a torrent of sonorous hail; the clouds pour a whole flood at once; and yet the unconquerable lightning struggles through; in a vast explosion the thunders roll their tremendous noise; the tempest growls; it was

feared the sky would burst and tumble down. The frightened monks ran to the altars. Some fetched out crucifixes ; some brought forth reliques ; some shouldered ponderous saints ; others spread out the altar-cloths, *corporalia*, in the open air ; others rang the bells ; others called upon God. The more they did all this, the worse it was. The monks, perceiving that prayer had no power against this disaster, betook themselves to their ordinary resource, and implored the aid of their patron, St. Hidulphus. They exposed the bier, on which his holy body lay, and invoked him with much vociferation, *altisonis vocibus ipsum inclamantes*. No otherwise than as if the clouds were intelligent creatures, they incontinently obeyed the command of the minister of God. The storm divided itself into four parts. All was serene and bright. The brethren overjoyed return, and celebrate a great mass, *missam majorem*. The business, however, was not yet over ; the horrible uproar of the atmosphere came on again, as suddenly as it had been appeased by the exposure of the sacred relics. Lightning and thunder were now much worse than before. The brethren, therefore, fetch their auxiliary again, *glebam sancti contra aëris tempestates pugnaturam*, in conjunction with crucifixes and censers. What could they do more ? On the appearance of the corpse, and the soul of the saint in heaven having prayed to God, all was immediately clear again. Every one was filled with exultation, and the monks carried back the shrine, praising God with all their might. Now, after much toil and terror, they at last, very late, sat down to dinner. But they had not yet rose up from the table, when they heard it begin to thunder again ; the ragged and fierce lightnings dart hither and thither in dreadful coruscations ; the hail rattles on the roof. What should the monks do, seeing now death stared them in the face ? They leave off eating ; rise up ; the people bawl out for the sacred helper to come forth. He is fetched with all speed, and now happily wages the third war. All is calm and serene. As these storms, however, had greatly terrified the brethren by their frequent recurrence, it was deemed advisable to keep the sacred coffin without, with watches about it, lest the fury should recommence in the night. And so at last they went to bed. Now, when the storm-leader (*tempestatum ductor* is a description of the Devil), saw, that he could not have his will, on account of the presence of the saint his antagonist ; he determined to show at least what he would have done, if he could. In the middle of that very night such a quantity of hail was showered down between the cloister and the hospital, in perfect silence, *cum summo silentio* (lest the brethren, perceiving it, should go and tell the saint of it) *demissa est*, as the author learnt from written accounts, *prout scriptum reperi*, that this heap of hail could not be melted by the sultry heat of full fifteen days ; while without the monastery there was not a single hailstone.

I have only here to observe, that *in concilio Bracarensi* in the

sixth century, tom. iii. *Harduini canone*, it was expressly forbid, under penalty of anathema, not to believe that the Devil creates lightning, thunder, and hail. But Mabillon makes no remark relating to this subject on the writer of the legends.

Immediately after this follows another story of a storm, as a proof that our Hidulphus was equally able to chastise his scorers, as to protect his votaries. On the festival of the same saint, in another (likewise unstated) year, a boor was carrying in his hay, instead of being at church, as it was the saint's festival. He had not reached home, when suddenly a storm arose. Thunder, lightning, and hail raged so together, that the boor could not think of any other means of safety, than by creeping under his cart. But in vain; a violent gust of wind overturned the vehicle, scattered the hay, and threatened to pelt the boor to death with hail-stones, which melting, nearly suffocated him with water, while the flashes of lightning assailed him on all sides. The whole village came out, to see what damage had been here and there done by the storm to the fruits of the earth; but found absolutely nothing injured, excepting this half-dead peasant: they, therefore, conveyed him home, and acknowledged the righteous judgment. Had he called upon St. Hidulph, he would presently have chased away the storm.

The whole of the second superstition I shall notice, that Spirits are the invisible owners of treasures buried in the earth, and absolutely will not give them up, unless violently forced to do so, is entirely of Pagan origin.

The prayer of St. Christopher was in some places used by Papists with all due devotion, in order to discover buried treasures, of which this saint was appointed inspector general.

I will here relate a short anecdote, preserved by Theodorus, Theophanes, and several others, not very modern authors. Chubdadesar was a fortress situated between the Indians and the Persians, wherein a great treasure was reported to lie buried. The Persian King Cabades would fain have got it into his hands; but it was guarded by some evil spirits. The King, therefore, commanded all the arts that his magicians could devise to be employed. These not succeeding, he ordered the Jews to exert their endeavours; but neither were these able to effect his purpose. It next occurred to him, to try whether it could not be brought about by the Christians. Accordingly a Bishop of the Christians residing in Persia was conducted to the spot. He held *συναξις*, took the communion first himself, then went and drove away the *dæmons* with the sign of the cross, and afterwards delivered the castle to the King without further difficulty. Cabades was so rejoiced at this miracle, that he thenceforth assigned the foremost place next to his person to the Christian Bishops, whereas till then Jews and Manicheans had held precedence. He likewise granted perfect liberty to all, that whoever would, might be baptized.

Here it is obvious, that the same opinion or principle was attributed to the Magicians, Jews, and Christians : that is, of having the controul over treasures in the custody of malignant spirits, so as to force them to give up their deposit ; and as here, the King, on looking about him for such arts, found them principally with the Christians : so, it is historically true, that even at present Protestants believe the Catholic Clergy or Monks still employ these potent spells. Gregorius even authenticates such enchantments. For, Dial. lib. i. cap. 4, he relates of the sorcerer Basilius (who had taken refuge in a monastery, because of an inquiry that was instituted) here, as he himself avers, several times lifted up the cell of St. Equitius into the air by arts of magic, but could do no harm to anybody.

The deservedly famous Theoderic, Astrogothic King of Italy, published an express prohibitory decree against all such superstitious traffic, and absolutely forbad, under severe penalties, the *murmur animarum* for the future, as utterly unbecoming Christians.

Yours, etc., T.

[1766, pp. 60, 61.]

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM AN ENGLISH GENTLEMAN, WHO
MADE THE TOUR OF IRELAND LAST SEPTEMBER.

In the county of Donnegal, at the distance of four miles from Lough Ewens, and in the midst of mountains and morasses, extending every way to a considerable distance, there is a very fine lake, in ancient times called Lough Fine, or White Lake. This piece of water is about a mile and an half in breadth, and somewhat more in length. To an island near the centre of it, from the beginning of May until about the middle of August every year, Popish penitents resort from all parts of Ireland to expiate their sins. This they do in obedience to their confessors, who may enjoin them any other penance at their discretion nearer home. The number, therefore, of these pilgrims who take this tour depends more on the friendship of distant priests to the prior of Lough Derg, than on the opinion of superior efficacy in this particular expiation. However, to keep up that opinion, and to give a countenance to the lucrative practice founded on it, the priests frequently—the titular bishops sometimes, and now and then a Romanist of some fashion—appear among the penitents. The rest are all of the poorer sort, to the number of three or four thousand every year. Of those the greater part are only proxies for wealthier people, who at a small expence in cash, thus discharge their sins, through the feet and knees of their indigent neighbours. As soon as a pilgrim hath arrived at the summit of a neighbouring mountain, from whence the holy lake is to be seen, he or she is obliged to uncover both hands and feet ; thus to walk to the water side, and thence, at the expence of sixpence, to be wafted into the island. On this island are erected two chapels and fifteen other houses, all thatched,

for the accommodation of priests and penitents. To these houses there are several confessionals, so contrived that the priest cannot see the person who disburthens his conscience. Each pilgrim on landing here is confessed anew, and enjoined a longer or shorter station (so the performance of this penance is called), according to the quality of his sins, his leisure, or the judgment of his confessor. He subsists on oatmeal, sometimes made into bread, and on water, during his stay in the island, which lasts three, six, or nine days, as the station is more or less extended.

To have a right idea of that part of the penance now to be mentioned, it must first be told that there are seven heaps of rude stones, with each of them a cross at top, about five or six yards from one another. At a couple of yards' distance from each is a circular row of the like stones not above a yard in height, drawn round the central heap, with a little gap or passage on one side. The pilgrim is obliged to foot it without shoes or stockings nine times round the outside of each row on a path consisting of very rough and sharp stones, and must by no means pick his steps, for this would hinder the *remission* of his sins at the soles of his feet, their proper outlet, and besides, divide his attention from the Ave Maries and Pater-nosters, whereof he is to mumble a certain number, letting fall a bead at each as he circulates, for on the holy string depends the arithmetic of a devotion which has number but no weight. These heaps and vows are called the beds of so many celebrated Saints in the Roman Calendar.

When this is over, and the penitent's conscience and pocket are called to a fresh account (for every day, sometimes more than once a day, he confesses and pays sixpence), he is sent to traverse on his bare knees, and on stones as sharp as before, the shorter paths within each row, and round the little heap nine times, repeating *aves* and dropping beads till his account is out, at which he kisses the cross, and his knees make holiday. After this preparation he is admitted into purgatory, which is in reality nothing more than two parallel rows of pretty large stones, set upright at the distance of scarcely three feet, with others as large laid over, altogether forming a kind of narrow vault of not more than four feet elevation; *pervious* here and there to the light. This vault is only so long as to hold twelve penitents at once, who sit close to one another in a row, with their chins almost touching their knees, without eating, drinking, or sleeping, for the space of twenty-four hours, repeating *aves* and dropping beads as above. To prevent in this situation the danger of a nap, each penitent is armed with a long pin, more pungent it should seem than conscience herself—to be suddenly inserted into the elbow of his next neighbour at the first approach of a nod. But not to depend wholly on either, the priest hath inserted into his mind an article of faith more stimulating than even the pin; namely, that if any penitent

should fall asleep in purgatory, the devil thereby acquires a right to the whole covey, having already swept away two, and having a prophecy in his favour that he shall get a third. To this is sometimes added an extraordinary exposure or two in cases uncommonly criminal, such as setting the delinquents to roost on beams that go across the chapel, with their busts sticking through the thatch.

The sufferings here mentioned do not carry off the whole mass of sins. Some are forced through the feet, some through the knees, but the remainder is so softened and loosened, that a good washing is sufficient to scour them away. In order to this, the penitent is placed on a flat stone in the lake, where, standing in the water up to his breast or chin, according to his stature, and repeating and dropping beads to a considerable amount, he is reduced to the innocence of a child just christened.

When all is over, the priest bores a gimblet-hole through the pilgrim's staff near the top, in which he fastens a cross peg, gives him as many holy pebbles out of the lake as he cares to carry away, for amulets to be presented to his friends, and so dismisses him, an object of veneration to all other papists, not thus initiated, who no sooner see the pilgrim's cross in his hands, than they kneel down to get his blessing.

[1766, pp. 172, 173.]

It is long since I formed a design of communicating my sentiments of the state of the Romish religion in Ireland, to the public, and the evil thereof, with a scheme for the amending it; but meeting with an extract of a letter from an English gentleman, who made the tour of Ireland last summer, giving an account of the pilgrimage of Lough Finn, with a gentleman's remarks on the pernicious consequences attending it, I could not any longer be at rest while I thought of anything that might advance religion, or the welfare of any of his Majesty's dominions, especially that island which Providence ordered to be the place wherein I first drew the breath of life.

This gentleman's account is literally true of that place, and manner of pilgrimage; and, besides it, there is, in the West of the county of Mayo, in Connaught, another place of extraordinary worship, or pilgrimage, called Croagh Patric, and, I doubt not but Leinster and Munster each has their extraordinary provincial places of pilgrimages. Besides these, there is not a parish in Ireland that has not, or had, their places of doing *pennances*, though many of them are grown obsolete, each dedicated to their respective Saint, and certain days in every year set apart, whereon in the morning they confess, do penance, and hear mass, and in the evening are guilty of the greatest debauches.

In the year 1750, there was one of these obsolete wells found in the parish of Cual Eira, eight miles south-west from Sligo, which was vaulted

overhead with long flags laid across from side to side. The pretended manner of finding it is thus told : "There was a man in the village, who either was sick himself, or one of his family (as I remember the story), who dreamt, that if he would go to such an heap of stones, by digging he would find a well, and by drinking the water, and bathing, he would find a certain cure, for it was an holy well ; which dream was communicated to the priest, and all was executed accordingly, and had the desired success."

This being noted in the country, there soon resorted thither every Saturday night, to the number of between two and three thousand patients, and others, of all disorders, and those whose disorders would not permit them to be taken thither, the water was brought home to them, and some made a trade of carrying the water to distant parts (as many did, about the year 1736, from Lough Finn, as I remember) to cure all manner of disorders, (and which water, in 1736, I very well remember, sold, where I lived, at 6d., 8d. and 10d. per quart, according to the different success of sale the carriers had on the road) and, to give the greater sanction to our present well, the priests foretold that there was to be a *lockruinn*, i.e., an heavenly illumination at midnight, about the well, on such a Saturday night, and whether the breaking out of a bright star happened, or the imposition of them that was in the secret, by a glance of light from the fire (for they had a booth and fire all night) I can't tell, but some said there was the forementioned light, and others not ; but afterwards these illuminations were common every Saturday night, but hid from unbelievers and hereticks, for many of them, through the general report, had credulity enough to resort thither for relief. To make everything look the more feasible, they wanted a name for this holy well, therefore the clergy could not, of their own authority, give it one, but must write to the Pope, to know its name in his 'Kalendar,' which took up most of that summer ; who had for answer, that there had been an holy well at that place, which was called *Tobar na Ttrinoïd*, i.e., Trinity Well ; therefore he sent a Bull to have it called its former name. There was great resort the next year, but how long it continued, or if it does still continue in vogue, I cannot tell, as towards the end of 1752 I left that part of the country, and cannot say I have heard anything of it since.

One Sunday evening I had a desire, through curiosity, to go and see this extraordinary place, and lo ! this miraculous well had scarce as much water left as would cover one's shoe-soles, and that as thick as any puddle whatever ; and I was told that before any was admitted to bathe, all that was to drink was ordered to lave their water, and then they went through their course of devotions, and, though they could only wet their feet, it was sufficient to supply the deficiency of the water, which the Saint-founder had been so sparing of ; for, sure, if he could give it the efficacy of healing, he also could increase its

quantity for the convenience of the publick. But so it was, that five days out of seven was necessary for recruiting the water to supply the market on Saturday and Sunday, for on no other days had it its divine quality, so that those that were so sacrilegious as to steal it on any other days were not to partake of its virtues.

Manners, etc., of the Irish Peasantry.

[1751, pp. 466-467.]

From the amorous disposition of these people's tempers, which breaks out upon all occasions, in an excess of awkward complaisance to their females (who are generally handsome, if not a little too masculine and indelicate in their limbs) may probably proceed the universal passion that prevails among them for poetry, music, and dancing, after their own rustic fashion. Here one may meet shepherds singing pastorals of their own composition, to some real, not imaginary mistress. Every village has a bagpiper, who, every fine evening, after working hours, collects all the young men and maids in the village about him, where they dance most chcarfully; and it is really a very pleasing entertainment to see the expressive, though awkward attempts of nature to recommend themselves to the opposite sex. I have often diverted myself with finding out, from their significant looks and gestures, a prude or a coquet among the girls, and a coxcomb or a fop among the young fellows, and to see all the affectation of the drawing-room practised by these uncouth rusticks on the green.

When a matrimonial compact is agreed, a cow and two sheep are generally the portion of the maid, and a little hut and a potato-garden all the riches of the man. Here the woman always retains her maiden name, and never assumes the surname of the husband, as is generally practised in other countries. I have been informed, that this is owing to a custom they had among them, in antient times, of marrying for a year only, at the expiration of which term the couple might lawfully part and engage elsewhere, unless they should chuse to renew their agreement for another year: By this means, if there was any mutual liking at meeting, both parties were continually upon their guard to oblige each other, that an inclination of living together might still be kept alive on both sides. The woman therefore who might, if she chose it, have a new husband every year of her life, always retained her own name, because, to assume a new one with every husband would create infinite confusion; and this custom, as to the name, is retained to this very day. At their weddings they make a great feast, which is the only time of their lives, perhaps, that they ever taste meat or any kind of strong liquors. Upon these occasions, one of the sheep, at least, is consumed, and the other is sold to purchase a barrel of a kind of very bad ale, which in their language they call shee-been and a corn-spirit called usquebaugh or whisky, which very much

in its taste and qualities resembles the worst London gin. With this they for once carouse and make merry with their friends. They are indeed at all times great pretenders to hospitality, as far as their abilities will permit; whence they have this universal custom among them, that, in all kinds of weather, when they sit down to their miserable meal, they constantly throw their doors open, as it were, to invite all strangers to partake of their repast. And in the midst of all their poverty, chearful content so perfectly supplies the want of other enjoyments, that I verily believe they are the happiest people in the world. In the midst of very hard labour, and what to an Englishman would seem pinching necessity, they are ever chearful and gay, continually telling stories, while at their work, of the antient giants of that country, or some such simple tales, or singing songs in their own language; and, in the wildness of their notes, I have often found something irregularly charming. As these are always of their own composition, I concluded they must be quite original in their thought and manner, as the authors are all illiterate, and understand no other language whence they might borrow either; and I imagined it would be no bad way to discover the genius, as well as abilities of the people, by observing what turn they generally gave their poetical performances. I was in some measure able to get over the difficulty of understanding their language, by the assistance of a very agreeable young lady who understood the Irish tongue perfectly well, and she has often sung and translated for me some of their most popular ballads. The subject of these is always love; and they seem to understand poetry to be designed for no other purpose than to stir up that passion in the mind. As you are a man of curiosity, I shall present you with one attempted in rhyme, as a specimen of their manner; which take as follows:

A translation of an Irish song, beginning, "Ma ville slane g'un oughth chegh khune," etc.:

Blest were the days, when in the lonely shade,
Join'd hand in hand, my love and I have stray'd,
Where apple-blossoms scent the fragrant air,
I've snatch'd soft kisses from the wanton fair.

Then did the feather'd choir in songs rejoice,
How soft the cuckoo tun'd her soothing voice!
The gentle thrush with pride display'd his throat,
Vying in sweetness with the blackbird's note.

But now, my love, how wretched am I made,
My health exhausted and my bloom decay'd I
Pensive I roam the solitary grove—
The grove delights not—for I miss my love.

Once more, sweet maid, together let us stray,
And in soft dalliance waste the fleeting day;
Through hazel-groves, where clust'ring nuts invite,
And blushing apples charm the tempted sight.

In awful charms secure, my lovely maid
 May trust with me her beauty in the shade ;
 Oh, how with sick'ning fond desire I pine,
 Till my heart's wish, till you, my love, are mine !
 Hence with these virgin fears, this cold delay :
 Let love advise ; take courage, and away.
 Your constant swain for ever shall be true,
 O'er all the plain, shall ne'er love one, but you.

To understand many of the beautiful and natural turns of thought in these lines, you must be informed, that wild apples and nuts, which the woods yield spontaneously in that country, as in ours, are the choicest present lovers make to their mistresses, who generally carry the wild apples about them as a perfume ; they are therefore very natural images to be introduced in their poetry.

Yours, etc., M. N. M.

Popular Superstitions of Lincolnshire.

[1833, *Part I.*, pp. 590-593.]

It may not be altogether uninteresting to place upon permanent record, in your venerable Miscellany, a few remarks on the popular superstitions which still exist in divers parts of this extensive county. I presume not to think that I have collected all the vulgar errors which prevail among the rustic population here ; but my researches have been tolerably successful ; for, being thrown by my profession into the constant society of all descriptions of people, and having thus become acquainted with the various modes of life and habits of thinking which distinguish the different classes of society, not excepting the cottager and the mechanic, into whose humble dwellings my pastoral visits have ever appeared peculiarly acceptable, I have never waived an opportunity of combating a prejudice, or endeavouring to eradicate a superstition which tended to weaken the influence of Christianity in an uninstructed mind ; and by this process I have acquired a pretty accurate knowledge of the numerous and diversified sources of amusement and terror which are indulged and fostered amongst us.

The *death-omen*, with all its appalling methods of conveying intelligence "of fearful import," still possesses the power of communicating alarm. A *winding-sheet* in the candle, that well-known messenger of fate, retains its accustomed influence ; as does also the *coffin* when it explodes from the fire, though it requires some experience in the interpretation of omens to determine the exact form of this equivocal cinder ; for the *coffin* and the *purse* are so nearly allied, that it would puzzle a common observer to pronounce accurately whether it were a sign of death, or of some accession of wealth. The howling of a dog at midnight has given many an unfortunate family the vapours for a month ; and it has been the universal belief of all

antiquity that the howling of a dog portends the death of a relative or friend.

Many are the signs of misfortune with which our species contrive to make themselves miserable. If a stocking or petticoat be drawn on in a reversed position, and the error be rectified, it is a prognostic of ill-luck; but the omen may be averted by allowing it to remain. It is esteemed unlucky to walk under an erected ladder, or to break the small end of an egg; or to suffer the cat to sit with her back to the fire; but it is exceedingly fortunate to find a piece of money, or a broken horse shoe, particularly if it be studded full of nails. A knife or a pair of scissors is considered an unpropitious present; for thus the tie of friendship or affection is supposed to be severed. If anyone would invoke success on another's undertaking, he will silently propitiate the goddess Fortuna by the offering of an old shoe, cast over the threshold of the door as his friend leaves the house. On a market-day it is not uncommon to see the stall-man spit on the first money he takes, to insure a prolific market. The right side of the body is accounted lucky, and the left unlucky. Thus, if the left ear or cheek burn or tingle, it is an intimation that some person is speaking evil of you; but if the sensation be felt on the right side of the face, you may enjoy the pleasing reflection that some one is speaking in your praise.

"Absentes tinnitu aurium præsentire sermones de se, receptum est."

PLINY [*Nat. Hist.*, lib. xxviii., cap. 5.]

If the left hand itches, you are about to pay; but if the right, you will receive money. This belief has been transmitted to us from the remotest antiquity. Solomon says, "A wise man's heart is at his right hand, but a fool's heart at his left."* And the scholiast upon Sophocles makes a similar observation: "The right hand signifies prudence, the left folly."† At this early period it was esteemed unlucky to put on or take off the left shoe or sandal before the right. Even Augustus Cæsar was not exempt from this weakness; for it is well known that when his life was in danger from a mutiny amongst his soldiers, he imputed it to the circumstance of having that very morning put on his left shoe before his right.‡

There exist many methods of averting an evil omen. If salt be accidentally overturned, it is unlucky for the person *towards* whom it falls. But if that person, without hesitation or remark, take up a single pinch of the salt between the finger and thumb of his right hand, and cast it over his left shoulder, the threatened misfortune will be averted by the efficacy of the atoning sacrifice. Salt, the emblem of friendship, was anciently offered to the guests at an entertainment, as a pledge of welcome. If on these occasions it was *scattered* when presenting to any particular individual, it was accounted an un-

* Eccl. x. 2.

† Ajace, v. 184.

‡ Plin. "Nat. Hist., l. vii., c. 7.

propitious omen, and some dispute or angry disagreement was confidently anticipated. In Egypt and the neighbouring idolatrous nations, *salt* was a common metaphor for calamity and desolation. Thus the Persian *Berhani Katteâ*, cited by Wait,* explains the phrase, "to have salt upon the liver," as a metaphor expressive of enduring calamity upon calamity, and torment upon torment. The inhabitants of Pegu still, as we are told, offer an indirect species of worship to his Satanic majesty, as the author of evil; and in one of the ceremonies performed to his honour, they throw a small portion of provisions over their left shoulder, before they eat, as a sacrifice acceptable to him. This may refer to the custom already noticed. The salt is cast over the left shoulder as an offering to avert the impending calamity, by appeasing the Author of misfortune or evil.†

It is unlucky to meet a funeral procession; but the omen may be counteracted by taking off your hat, which is intended as a mark of respect to the evil spirits who may be hovering about the corpse. Seamen whistling for a wind, which I have repeatedly seen practised on board of the passage boats plying between Grimsby and Hull, before the introduction of steam packets rendered the wind, as an agent, of little value, was a direct invocation to "the prince of the power of the air" to exert himself in their behalf. Pliny tells us that in his time all nations worshipped flashes of lightning by whistling or chirping with the lips.‡ The Finlanders, many of whose vessels come annually into Grimsby dock, use a kind of magical cord for raising the wind, and the effect is produced by untying certain charmed knots, accompanied by a wild song or incantation by the whole ship's crew.§ The ceremony used in Persia is more simple and characteristic. When a peasant thinks his corn is winnowed too

* "Orient. Ant.," p. 78.

† See Owen on Serpents, p. 3, c. 6.

‡ "Nat. Hist.," l. xxviii., c. 2.

§ *Vide* Brand's "Pop. Ant." in loc. Seamen are uniformly inclined to superstition. My friend the late Capt. Mott, R.N., used frequently to repeat an anecdote of a seaman under his command. This individual, who was a good sailor and a brave man, suffered much trouble and anxiety from his superstitious fears. When on the night watch, he would see sights and hear noises in the rigging and the deep, which kept him in a perpetual fever of alarm. One day the poor fellow reported upon deck that the devil, whom he knew by his horns and cloven feet, stood by the side of his hammock the preceding night, and told him that he had only three days to live. His messmates endeavoured to remove his despondency by ridicule, but without effect; and the next morning he told the tale to Capt. Mott, with this addition, that the fiend had paid him a second nocturnal visit, announcing a repetition of the melancholy tidings. The captain in vain expostulated with him on the folly of indulging such groundless apprehensions; and the morning of the fatal day being exceedingly stormy, the man, with many others, was ordered to the topmast, to perform some duty amongst the rigging. Before he ascended he bade his messmates farewell, telling them that he had received a third warning from the devil, and that he was confident he should be dead before night. He went aloft with the foreboding of evil on his mind, and in less than five minutes he lost his hold, fell upon the deck, and was killed upon the spot.

tediously, he takes a kind of bastard saffron, called *bad engiz*, which he rubs between his hands and scatters in the air, with the confident expectation that a favourable wind will immediately spring up.* A single magpie crossing your path is esteemed an evil omen, and I once saw a person actually tremble and dissolve into a copious perspiration, when one of these birds flitted chattering before him. But the evil influence may be averted by laying two straws across, or by describing the figure of a cross on the ground. The use of straws in this charm may have been derived from the Runic mythology, which inculcated that "*straws* dissolve enchantments."† The peculiar position in which these straws are to be placed, refers for its origin to the Church of Rome, whose respect for this emblem, in all its varieties, amounted almost to adoration; and it was deemed of sufficient efficacy to drive away evil spirits. To this day it retains a secret influence over many minds, notwithstanding the ceaseless attempts of the Puritans during the Commonwealth to consign to eternal oblivion even the innocent use of this comprehensive symbol, which was denounced as superstitious, idolatrous, and profane. Flecknoe says, "Had they their will, a bird should not fly in the air with its wings across; a ship with its cross-yard sail upon the sea; nor profane tailor sit cross-legged on his shopboard, or have cross buttons to wind his thread upon."‡ The magpie, however, is not always an ill-omened bird, but conveys good or bad luck by numbers. The doggrel proverb is,

"One for sorrow, two for mirth,
Three for a wedding, four for death."

This superstition is evidently a remnant of the system of augury, or divination by birds. The buffoonery of April§ and Valentine|| days

* Richardson's "Dissert. on the Manners of the Eastern Nations," 2nd edit., p. 191.

† Havamaal.

‡ "Enig. Char.," p. 83. [See note 27.]

§ A custom which bears some resemblance to our April foolery, is practised in Hindoostan. During the celebration of a festival called the Huli, held in the month of March, the Hindoos amuse themselves by sending each other on errands and expeditions that are to end in disappointment, and raise a laugh at the expense of the person sent. The last day of Huli is a general holiday. This festival is held in honour of the new year; and as the year formerly began in Britain about the same time, Mr. Maurice thinks ("Ind. Ant.," vol. vi., p. 71) that the diversions of April day, both in Britain and India, had a common origin in the ancient celebration of the return of the vernal equinox with festal rites. (See also "Asiat. Res.," vol. ii., p. 334.)

|| In Persia a feast was held in February, dedicated to the angel Isfendarmuz, who was esteemed the ostensible guardian of the fair sex; and on this occasion they enjoyed some very singular privileges. The Persian ladies on this day were invested with almost absolute power. The husbands complied to the utmost of their ability with all the commands of their wives; and the virgins, without offence to delicacy, might pay their addresses to whom they pleased; and they seldom sued in vain. Numberless marriages were in consequence solemnized, and many

is so well known all over England, as to render it unnecessary for me to say more than that it is not omitted in the county of Lincoln.

Several ridiculous superstitions respecting the weather, receive implicit credence from some ignorant persons whom I have met with, although founded on proverbs equally groundless and untenable, which experience has falsified over and over again. Such as, Rainy Friday, rainy Sunday; A sunshiny shower, bodes rain again to-morrow; St. Swithin's rain continues forty days, etc., etc., etc. At the change of the moon, if she appear with *sharp horns*, or assume the form of the heraldic crescent, commonly called lying on her back, it is accounted a certain prognostic of bad weather. We have an old saw which says, "Friday's moon, come when it will, it comes too soon." Shooting stars are signs of wind. Some persons will prognosticate a change of weather from certain aches and pains in their joints, or any diseased part of the body.

I break off abruptly, because I find myself unable to finish my subject within the usual limits of a single communication. If this be acceptable, I will proceed in my next to notice some of the superstitions extant in this county at weddings and christenings; with certain divinations, and a few extraordinary sources of terror, which are not entirely eradicated.

Yours, etc., GEO. OLIVER.

[See *Gent. Mag. Library*, vol. i., "Manners and Customs," pp. 28-33.]

Kentish Superstitions.

[1824, *Part II.*, pp. 111, 112.]

There are few of our popular superstitions, however vague they may be, that have not some slight colour of fact, and that do not originate in some incident of local history. But should this position be denied by any of your readers, they will at least allow that these traditions are often in themselves of great antiquity, and on that account interesting and valuable.

Sailors, it will be allowed, are generally extremely credulous; this may be caused chiefly by their having at times a great deal of leisure, which is employed in telling stories of a marvellous kind to each other. We have the authority of Lord Orford, that superstition is catching; and these tales during a long night-watch, when all is still, and courage in a measure had in requisition, rivet their attention, and get firm hold on their minds.

A correspondent at Maidstone writes: "We have a class of people in these parts called *Ufflers*, i.e., men in the barging line out of employ, who attend as extra help to get the craft home in our inland navigation: most of them have been to sea, and are tinctured with

engagements made; the angel being supposed to shed remarkable favour, not only on the nuptials then celebrated, but on all the contracts entered into during this gay festival. (See Richardson's "*Dissert.*," p. 189.)

notions of ghosts, witches, and dæmons. You must know that between this town and Aylesford, we have two places noted for the appearance of fearful sights. One is that of a descendant of the Colepeppers or Culpeppers of Aylesford, who is seen flying across the path with his head under his arm !*

"The other is that of a white horset† enveloped in a body of fire.

"Let those who please laugh at these stories, but certain it is that most of our people would sooner make a large circuit than pass by either of these places on a dark night. It happened a few nights since, that two men and a dog had to pass the scene of these fearful incidents; the dog frisked playfully before them, till on a sudden it gave a pitiful howl, and slunk back evidently in dismay! 'What's that in the hedge?' says one of the men. 'I don't know,' cries out the other; 'but it looks like a reindeer.' 'No,' rejoins the other, 'it is a woman.' While they were gazing on it, the form moved gently across a field of clover. 'I'll follow it,' says one, 'be it what it may;' and he was as good as his word. He ran—it ran—he quickened his pace, but it had still the start, till his courage was curbed by a thump against some sheep-gates thro' which the sprite had glided, little the worse for wear. He paused—'fear shrunk his sinews and congealed his blood,' a feeling of horror overwhelmed him, causing

"... each particular hair to stand on end
Like quills upon the fretful porcupine."

His knees smote each other, and he nearly fell, till on recovering a little he ran back to the place where he left his companion, who had made the best of his way towards a neighbouring hamlet."

The following remarks were elicited in a conversation with an old man, with whom I accidentally fell in just below Aylesford. He recollected (he said) a large stone in the neighbourhood being broken up, and displaced, alongside of which human bones were found; adding, that in "yonder field" "a mortal many" bones and skulls were ploughed up some time ago; and lately a human jaw and shin-bone. "There once stood a town on this spot," continued he, "and

* One Thomas Culpepper was "put to deth at Tiborne," 10 Dec., 1541. This circumstance might give rise to the tradition. Some attribute a similar fate to Hengist, who made himself notorious in this vicinity, circa 450.

† A stone some time since broken up and removed, at no great distance from this scene of wonder, bore for name the "white horse-stone," the legend of which is, that one who rode a beast of this description, was killed on or about the spot so commemorated. Might not this have been *Horsa* the Saxon, who was slain "near Ægelsford," and whose name is so analogous to that of the animal in question? As to the circumstance of the figure being surrounded with fire, it may not be irrelevant to state that ghosts assume the privilege of walking the earth chiefly during purgatory, and while doomed

"to fast in fires
Till the foul crimes done in their days of nature
Are burnt and purg'd away."

the cottage just at hand is built entirely of its stone foundations, which were turned up by the plough. It was called *Eckell Town*, and that wood still hears the name of Eckell Wood.'”*

In Cookstone or Cuxton Church, near Rochester, is the corpse of a woman, who, in her will, directed her coffin to have a lock, the key of which was to be put into her own hand, that she might be able to release herself at pleasure ! This legend is as old as my great grandmother. In May, 1823, I made inquiry on the spot as to its truth, when I learnt that the said coffin, having mouldered away, had been committed to earth recently.

A superstitious practice of sticking pins in a stile whenever a corpse is taken over it, prevails in these parts. Its origin would oblige.

A skull, with a spear-head through it, was dug up at Deptling a short time since ; the remains of a helmet, supposed to be Roman, were dug up in Maidstone ; it was crowned with a knob, as if to receive a plume of feathers : an urn was also discovered here, but broken up in hopes of finding treasure !

D. A. BRITON.

Suffolk Superstitions.

[1867, *Part I.*, pp. 307-322.]

[Passages that are merely prefatory or which comment on the items of folklore are omitted.]

There are two old women of my acquaintance—they are still living, though for obvious reasons I must not give their names—who reside in the same house, the one occupying the front, the other the back room. One of these had retired to rest in the back room, “In peace,” as she assured me, “with the whole world, for she had said her prayers to her neighbour ;” aloud, I conclude, but not, I hope, in the boastful spirit of a real Pharisee. She had just “forgot the world,” which, in the East Anglian dialect, means that she was just falling asleep, when she was startled by feeling something pass quietly over her face, and then proceed to hop quickly down her right side. She resolved, however, not to be alarmed, though she was doubtless in a great fright ; and she was comforted for a while by thinking that the mysterious visitor had departed, for the saltatory movement ceased. But by-and-by, to her exceeding consternation, she felt him rapidly mounting up the other side, and this resumption of his progress was attended by three loud raps on the wall of the bedroom near her head. She jumped out of bed, and rushing to her friend and patron saint in the next room, eagerly besought her protection. The two held a hurried consultation, and agreed to summon in a neighbour

* “Eccles” is still the name of a manor in Larkfield Hundred, and in the lath of Aylesford. It is mentioned in Domesday by the name of *Aiglessa*, and was, at the time of making that survey, a place of some consequence. Houses are noticed in this record. See Hasted.

by some less ominous raps against the wall which separated their houses, and on her arrival the haunted bed was brought into the front room, and the original tenant was persuaded to re-occupy it. But she had scarcely laid herself down again before the persevering "Pharisee" [fairy], as she called him, mounted on her foot, and caused her wildly to entreat the pity and assistance of her friends. By this time, the belief in a supernatural visitor had possessed the trio, for they seized the warming-pan, and made a loud din in the persuasion that the noise would effectually drive the intruder away; a persuasion which the event seemed to justify, for the "Pharisee" did not disturb his intended victim any more that night.

The alarm, however, had been too great to be altogether dissipated, like evil spirits by the return of light (I have been told of an old man who was described as a "half-bred Baptist," who assured an aged friend, with great solemnity, that whenever the devil appeared, he was permitted only to appear in *white*, and that our Blessed Saviour always appeared in *red*); and the old lady left her home next morning for the residence of her daughter, with whom she remained two days. She was then induced to go back to her own house, reassured in some degree by a charm against "Pharisees" which a neighbour had recommended to her. This was a large stone with a hole in it (a somewhat similar remedy is used in Yorkshire against the evil eye—"Choice Notes," from *Notes and Queries*, pp. 129, 130), to be suspended from the top of her bed, so as to hang directly over her head. Butler, in "*Hudibras*," seems to allude to this charm, when he says of Sidrophel, that he knew how to

"Chase evil spirits away by dint
Of sickle, horse-shoe, hollow flint."

(Part ii., canto 3, lines 291, 292.)

The two friends of the old woman considered it to be the ghost of another old woman who had formerly lived in the same house. The three raps, which are said to have been heard, are popularly regarded as an omen of death. "Three loud and distinct knocks at the bed's head," says Grosce, "of a sick person, or at the bed's head or door of any of his relations, is an omen of his death." (Brand's "*Popular Antiquities*," iii., p. 121.)

I believe also that the idea that sounds have a wonderful efficacy against evil spirits is very prevalent. [The writer here quotes Gatty's "*Hist. of the Bell*," p. 12; Du Chaillu's "*Equatorial Africa*," p. 39; Bingham's "*Origines Ecclesiasticæ*," ii., p. 492, and Longfellow's "*Beleaguered City*."]]

I inquired from the wiseacre who recommended this charm what his authority for it was, and then discovered another interesting fact. He informed me that such a phylactery was formerly suspended from the roof of the stables at Peyton Hall, in the parish of Hadleigh,

when he worked there as a boy (a hag-stone, with a hole through, tied to the key of the stable-door, protects the horses : and if hung up at the bed's head, the farmer also. "Choice Notes—Folk Lore of Lancashire," p. 186). The "Pharisees," he alleged, used to ride the horses about at night, so that the men who had charge of them, on going into the stables in the morning, often found them quite in a foam (Scott's "Discovery of Witchcraft," 1665, p. 51). But when these stones were hung up, no Pharisee was able to enter. [The author here quotes from Brand's "Pop. Antiq.," ii., p. 287 ; Scott's "Demonology," pp. 152, 153.]

I must add that, in the case of our old woman, the stone proved eminently successful. It hung for some weeks over the head of the sleeper, for whilst it remained there she always passed tranquil nights. I ridiculed the idea of its potency so much, however, that at length it was taken down ; but in a few months afterwards fear again overcame the better judgment of the old woman, and she placed large stones on various parts of the floor of the room. (Agate, however, has a very different effect : The common belief in Iceland is that you have only to place a piece of obsidian, or Iceland agate, on a farm, to cause all the inhabitants to quarrel. Forbes "Iceland," 1860, p. 267.) Scott's "Discovery of Witchcraft," 1665, pp. 166-167, cap. vi, on the virtues and qualities of sundry precious stones, is interesting, as it appears to explain the origin of coral necklaces for children ; also Brown's "Vulgar Errors," Book V., p. 317.

There was an old man (he is now dead), living at a short distance from the former old woman, under whose bed (see "Our English Homes" p. 109), it was reported, a "Pharisee" used to creep at night and try to throw him out.

I cannot refrain from giving here "an excellent way to get a fayrie." "First, get a broad square christall or Venice glasse, in length and breadth three inches. Then lay that glasse or christall in the blood of a white henne, three Wednesdayes or three Fridayes. Then take it out and wash it with holy aq., and fumigate it. Then take three hazle sticks, or wands, of an yeare groth ; pill them fayre and white ; and make them soe longe as you write the spiritt's name, or fayrie's name, which you call three times on every stick being made flatt on one side. Then bury them under some hill, whereat you suppose fayries haunt, the Wednesday before you call her : and the Friday followinge take them uppe and call her at eight, or three, or ten of the clocke, which be good planetts and houres for that turne ; but when you call be in cleane life and turne thy face towards the East, and when you have her bind her in that stone and glasse" (Percy Reliques, iii., p. 263).

In the times immediately preceding the great rebellion, and during its early progress, the Eastern Counties were notorious for the number of their witches. (See Isaac Wilson's "Sermons on Female Characters of Holy Scripture," pp. 127, 128, and "Celebrated Trials,"

vol. iii., pp. 547, 548; Hook's "Archbishops," vol. i., p. 420.) About the year 1640 they formed an association for the prosecution of witches, and Matthew Hopkins, of Manningtree, was appointed witch-finder, with the promise of a reward of one pound for every detection. The result was he brought many reputed witches to trial and death. According to one account, about forty were condemned at Bury, in the years 1645 and 1646 (*Hudibras*, pt. ii., canto iii., lines 139-144), and even after the Restoration, in 1662 and 1664, two women were tried for witchcraft at Bury St. Edmunds, before the humane Sir Matthew Hale, and by him condemned to death (see "Celebrated Trials," vol. ii., pp. 213-227, and Mackay, "Popular Delusions," vol. ii., pp. 148-149.) The belief in witchcraft still lingers amongst us. A few years ago I met, in a cottage at Hadleigh, a woman from Whatfield, who proved to be a devout believer in witchcraft. She said, with a positive earnestness which convinced me she was sincere in her error, that she knew of several instances of it, and of some families who were in possession of the secret. One case was that of a poor girl, who had been ill for a long time, and whose sickness apparently excited the commiseration of an aged female, who came every day to enquire after her. At length it occurred to one of the family that the old lady must needs be a witch, and accordingly it was proposed that a horse-shoe should be affixed to the sill of the outer door, in order to prevent her from entering the house. "On one of the bricks, which are close to the threshold of the door (south doorway, Stanningfield Church, Suffolk), is a glazed tile, on which is the figure of a horse-shoe, for the purpose, it is said, of preventing witches from entering the church."—"Proceedings of Suffolk Institute of Archæology," vol. iii., p. 309.

It was an ancient Saxon superstition that magical arts could not be practised, or practised so well, upon persons in the open air as in houses. (Turner's "Anglo-Saxons," vol. i., p. 196.) Thus when Ethelbert, King of Kent, gave audience to St. Augustine, A.D. 597, he would not allow the interview to take place in the palace, but met the great missionary in the open air in the Isle of Thanet; and it was the lingering influence of the same superstition, I conclude, which led all who were afraid of the devices of witches to exclude witches from their houses. [See note 28.] In the case of the reputed witch of Whatfield, the precaution succeeded; the old woman was never able to cross the threshold after the horse-shoe had been affixed to it, and the young woman rapidly regained her health. (See Smiles' "Lives of the Engineers," vol. i., p. 192.)

Another case was also mentioned by the same person. The ability to practise witchcraft, it was stated, was handed on from one to another, usually by the witch on her death-bed communicating the important secret to her chosen successor. My informant added that she knew an instance in which a box, containing little imps, was given

by an old witch to a young woman, whom she wished to succeed her in the art. The young woman, however, did not at all value the gift; but not knowing how to dispose of the disagreeable legacy, she called in the advice of a neighbour. The latter suggested that all the windows of the house should be closed, the shutters put up, and the doors locked and barred. This was the only preliminary to what was to follow. The windows were all closed and barred, a fire was lighted and the oven heated, and then the box which contained the imps was placed in the oven, and the door tightly fastened on the inside. The yells which soon proceeded from the oven were said to have been frightful beyond description, for the imps proved to be no salamanders. At length all was silent; the two women cautiously reopened the oven, and nothing was discovered to be left, either of the box or of the imps, but a little dust.

I have been told that there was formerly a family in Hadleigh whose limbs used to fall off in a remarkable way. The description I have heard of them leads me to suppose that they must have lost their limbs much in the same manner as a family of children in the parish of Wattisham, in the year 1762. Lord Mahon in his "*History of England*," tells us: "It chanced that six children in one family died in quick succession of a sudden and mysterious illness—their feet having first mortified and dropped off. Professor Henslow, who resides at no great distance from Wattisham, has given much attention to the records of this case, and has made it clear in his excellent essay on the *Diseases of Wheat* that in all probability their death was owing to the imprudent use of deleterious food—the ergot of rye. But he adds that in the neighbourhood the popular belief was firm that these poor children had been the victims of sorcery and witchcraft."

Much the same belief was entertained with regard to the persons I am speaking of, in whose case there was one peculiarity; they used to whirl round upon their stumps with inconceivable rapidity. They gained in consequence the reputation of being either the victims or the practisers of witchcraft.

It was easy enough formerly to excite suspicion on this head. "Even a sinister and malicious look in an old woman's cat," it has been said, "was enough to make her mistress suspected of dealings with the devil." For the "water ordeal" for witchcraft, see Hook's "*Archbishops of Canterbury*," vol. i., p. 350.

A clergyman who was present at one of our clerical meetings told us that he had heard of a case in Suffolk—I believe I am right when he says he witnessed it—of a man running round a room in a condition of extreme excitement, with his body at right angles to the wall, half way up between the floor and ceiling. He suggested this might be an example of demoniacal possession.

HUGH PILOT.

[1867, *Part I.*, pp. 728-741.]

I propose in this chapter to pass on to the subject of Popular Remedies for Complaints.

Calling at a cottage one day, I saw a small loaf hanging up oddly in a corner of the house. I asked why it was placed there, and was told that it was a Good Friday loaf—a loaf baked on Good Friday; that it would never grow mouldy (and on inspecting it I certainly found it very dry), and that it was very serviceable against some diseases, the bloody flux being mentioned as an example. Some weeks afterwards I called again, with a friend, at the same house, and drew his attention to the loaf, which was hanging in its accustomed corner. The owner of the house endeavoured to take the loaf down gently, but failing in the attempt, he gave a violent pull, and the precious loaf, to his great dismay, was shivered into atoms, but in the catastrophe gave us further proofs of its extraordinary dryness. The old man collected the fragments and hung them up in a paper bag, with all the more reverence on account of the good which the loaf, as he alleged, had done his son. The young man, having been seized with a slight attack of English cholera in the summer, secretly “absconded,” and ate a piece of the loaf, and when his family expressed astonishment at his rapid recovery, he explained the mystery by declaring that he had eaten of the Good Friday loaf, and had been cured by it.

For the hooping-cough many are the remedies. I have known the following employed: Procure a live flat-fish—a “little dab” will do; place it whilst alive on the bare chest of the patient; press it close down, and keep it there till it is dead. I have been assured by a mother, who made a trial of it, that in the cases of her two children it gave great relief. I have also met with these four prescriptions, all made use of in succession, but without success, in the same family. If several children are ill, take some of the hair of the eldest child, cut it into small pieces, and put them into some milk, and give the compound to the youngest to drink, and so on throughout the family; or let the patient eat a roasted mouse (see “Choice Notes,” pp. 164, 225, 226); or let the patient drink some milk which a ferret has lapped; or let the patient be dragged through a gooseberry-bush or bramble, both ends of which are growing in the ground. A person who would be offended at being thought ignorant told me himself that he and his wife had had several of their children passed under a bramble, both ends of which grew in the ground, with a view of curing them of hooping-cough. The party present at the ceremony, besides the father and mother of the children, consisted of the “wise man” of the neighbourhood and the nurse, and the scene of it was the large field opposite the west entrance to the Place Farm. I have been further told that to pass the patient through a slit in the stem of a young ash-tree is quite as efficacious as the gooseberry or bramble

remedies. I have known other persons procure hair from the cross on the back of a donkey, and having placed it in a bag, hang it round the necks of their invalid children ("Choice Notes," p. 217). The presumed virtue in this hair is connected, I imagine, with the fact that the ass is the animal which was ridden by our blessed Saviour, and with the superstition that the cross was imprinted on its back as a memorial of that event. I have heard also of a woman who obtained a certain number of "hodmidods," or small snails. These were passed through the hands of the invalids, and then suspended in the chimney on the string, in the belief that as they died, the hooping-cough would leave the children. At Monks Eleigh I have been informed they hang a live frog in the chimney in the same belief. Another popular remedy is to follow a plough, the smell of the newly turned earth being considered very wholesome.

I will mention next remedies for ague (see Lockhart's "Medical Missionary in China," pp. 58, 59; Scott's "Discovery of Witchcraft," pp. 153, 154; Wordsworth's "Ecclesiastical Biography," George Herbert, vol. iv., pp. 22, 23; Tymm's "Handbook of Bury," p. 18): a mixture of beer, gin, and acorns is sometimes employed; mustard and beer are also given; and the parents of one family have told me that they dosed their children so copiously with the latter draught that now, when they are grown up, they cannot bear the taste of its component parts. When I was suffering from ague a few years ago, I was strongly urged to go to a stile—one of those which are placed across footpaths—and to drive a nail into that part over which foot passengers travel in their journeys.

To swallow a spider, or its web, when placed in a small piece of apple, is an acknowledged cure for ague, which was unfortunately urged upon myself. It is employed not only by the poor, but by the better informed; and I have been told that it is also used in Ireland. Miss Strickland mentions an instance of its being tried in vain, but its failure excited great astonishment. "As true as I am alive, he (the ague) minded neither pepper nor gin taken fasting on a Friday morning, nor the black bottle-spiders made into pills with fresh butter."* This remedy, according to Longfellow, is known in America.† A prescription for the hooping-cough was furnished me. Procure a live spider, shut it up between two walnut-shells, and wear it on your person. As the spider dies, the cough will go away.

This next method is reckoned efficacious. A Suffolk clergyman told me that he once caught the ague in Kent, and that for a long time every effort to cure it failed. At length an old woman undertook to free him from his malady by putting a bandage on his wrist, which was to remain undisturbed for two or three weeks. He was

* "Old Friends and New Acquaintances," p. 152.

† "Evangeline," part i., c. 3.

not to know what it contained till it was removed. At the expiration of the set time, he found that the material in the bandage was composed of tallow and cayenne pepper ; but it had cured him.

This, indeed, the application of a plaster to the wrist, is an ancient kind of remedy in the eastern counties, for Fuller tells us, when speaking of James I., who died of a tertian-ague : "The Countess of Buckingham contracted much suspicion to herself and her son, for applying a plaster to the king's wrist without the consent of his physicians. And yet it plainly appeared that Dr. John Remington, of Dunmow in Essex, made the same plaster (one honest, able, and successful in his practice, who had cured many by the same); a piece whereof applied to the king, one eat down into his belly without the least hurt or disturbance of nature" (*"Ecclesiastical Hist.,"* vol. v., p. 568). The two following remedies were also recommended to me : Take a handful of salt and bury it in the ground, and as the salt dissolves, you will recover ; and many sympathizers were very clamorous that I should take an emetic. They had known persons, they said, who had thrown up some substance, which shook and "quaggled," and which they supposed to be an embodiment of the ague, for after it had been ejected, the patients got well.

I have, moreover, been assured by respectable persons that there was formerly a man in Hadleigh who "charmed" away the ague by pronouncing, or rather muttering, over each child a verse of Holy Scripture, taken, they believed, from the Gospel of St. John.

One more remedy for ague is for the patient to gather some teasles from the hedgerows, and carry them about his person.

I will now turn to another class of specifics. There were several old people, indeed there are some still, of my acquaintance, chiefly old women, who "bless" and "charm" different maladies, especially wounds from scalding and burning. I have been told on "good authority" of a man who could soothe persons, even when labouring under the wildest frenzies of some kind of fits, by the secret utterance of some particular words. (See Low's "*Sarawak*," etc., 1848, p. 139, for similar customs among the Mahometans.)

There was an old woman, of very witch-like appearance, who was supposed to have great skill in curing burns. She prepared a kind of ointment, and when a patient applied to her, she placed some of it upon the parts affected, then made the sign of the cross over it, and muttered certain mysterious words; which she would not disclose to anyone. This use of the cross in healing seems to be of long standing, for Bede tells us of a certain bishop who restored speech to a dumb youth by making the sign of the cross upon his tongue.

A boy having scalded his foot when making "suckers," for the saucepan which contained the butter and treacle had "toppled over," and poured its contents into his unlaced boot upon his foot, as he

stood by the fire intently watching the cookery, until the compound should be ready for his mouth, limped down, though in great pain, to another old woman for her to "bless" the wound.

We read in Bede of an instance of a similar superstition as early as the eighth century. He tells us how Hereburga, the abbess of the monastery at Wetadun, entreated Bishop John of York that he would vouchsafe to go in and give her (one of the nuns who was suffering from a swollen arm) his blessing; for that she believed she would be the better for his blessing or touching her. He accordingly went in . . . and said a prayer over her, and having given her his blessing, went out. The result was that Coenburg, the sick nun, was cured of the pain in her limbs, the swelling assuaged, and she returned thanks to the Lord our Saviour (Bede's "Ecclesiastical Hist.," book v., c. iii.).

I have made inquiries with the view of ascertaining what are the words employed; but the old women, like reputed witches, keep their own secret until they are on their deathbed, and then they communicate it to some favoured friend. I "pumped out" of a man, however, the following curious formula; and his wife, who was sitting by, confessed that the words were "not far wrong."

"There were two angels came from the North :
One brought fire, the other brought frost ;
Come out fire, go in frost ;
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."

("Choice Notes," pp. 84, 167, 179.)

The words must be repeated three times; and this fact, when taken in connection with the last line, warrants, I think, the common belief that in the number three, used here and in other instances, there is an allusion to the Holy Trinity. The common people at Moscow, when helping themselves to a third glass of tea, or in fact when about to do anything the third time, are wont to say carelessly, "One, two, three; God loves the Trinity" (Galton's "Vacation Tourists in 1861," p. 13).

Persons in a consumption have been known to have soup made of dried snakes (eating snakes was formerly supposed to have the same effect, and to make persons young: for authorities see "Choice Notes," p. 22; Steinmetz's "Japan and her People," p. 47; Lockhart's "Medical Missionary in China," p. 198; Low's "Sarawak," p. 146; Borrow's "Lavengro," vol. i., pp. 50-52), and I have been told that such snakes are kept on purpose in Covent Garden; indeed, the wife of a neighbouring clergyman assured me that she herself had sent up thither for dried snakes for a poor girl in her husband's parish. I have heard, though I forget the complaint for which they were used as a remedy, of snakes being caught and boiled down, so as to extract their medicinal properties.

The following remedy has been employed at Nedging for bilious attacks: Roll up a number of live "sow bags" (the armadillo vulgaris of naturalists), each one as a pill, and swallow them alive. They will remove the bile. We have several persons who profess to be able to cure warts, or "writs," as they are called, by passing the hand over them, and muttering some mysterious words. The operator must be told the exact number of warts which are worn by the applicant for a cure. If the remedy fail, he attributes the failure to his having been kept in ignorance of the real number of warts.

Other cures of warts are: Let the patient steal a piece of beef, and bury it in the ground; and then, as the beef decays, the warts will gradually die away. Or go to an ash-tree which has its "keys"—that is, husks with seeds—upon it, cut the initial letters of both your Christian and surname on the bark; count the exact number of your warts, and cut as many notches in addition to the letters as you have warts; and then, as the bark grows up, your warts will go away. Or take the froth off new beer, apply it to your warts, when no one sees you (for secrecy is absolutely necessary); do not wipe it away, but let it work off of itself, for three mornings, when your warts will disappear. Or gather a green sloe, rub it on your warts, then throw it over your left shoulder, and you will soon be free from them. Or take a snail out of its shell, and rub them with it. Or rub your warts with green bean leaves for several mornings, and the result will be the same.

To cure "nightmare," a poor man at Monks Eleigh, having a strong belief in the virtue of a flint with a hole in it, hung one such flint over the head of his bed as a preservative against nightmare. It succeeded in driving the nightmare from his head; but it was sent into his toes. Another remedy is: Before you go to bed, place your shoes carefully by the bedside, "coming and going"—that is, with the heel of one pointing in the direction of the toe of the other—and then you will be sure to sleep quietly and well (Scot's "Discovery of Witchcraft," p. 171; Brown's "Vulgar Errors," p. 319).

To cure or prevent cramp, take the small bone of a leg of mutton and carry it always about with you in your pocket.

An old man and his sister told me that they once knew of a frog being hung up in a chimney, in a bladder, as a cure for some complaint, the nature of which they had forgotten. The scratchings and noise made by the frog were awful, they said; but the sick man recovered.

I have spoken of roasted mice as a remedy for ague. I knew an old woman who had a dumb son, and she made him a mouse-pie in the hope that it would do him good.

A young woman had a swelling on her neck, and was advised to have it rubbed with a dead man's finger. She was accordingly brought down to the corpse of an old man, and, as she had not courage her-

self to apply the remedy, a female friend took the cold hand and touched the swelling with it. I have found another version of this remedy in a book of the last century: "A wen is said to be cured by the hand of a dead man, while hanging on the gallows. This is still a superstitious notion amongst the common people at this day" (Pegge's *"Anecdotes of the English Language,"* p. 141).

The following was reported to me as having been very efficacious in several instances. If a person has fainted, take a piece of tape, light it, let it burn for a few moments, then blow out the flame and put the smoking tape close to the nose of the patient. The smoke will very soon bring back consciousness.

For inflamed eyes, take a snail and place it close to the eye, then prick it with a needle and let the moisture which flows from the puncture trickle into the eye. It is said to have an excellent effect.

A woman, when suffering from pain in her cheek, applied a mustard poultice to her instep, in the expectation of being freed from the pain. A person at Monks Eleigh, who was subject to asthma, used to swallow a great quantity of shot, in order, as he said, "to keep down his lights." I believe that shots are given to horses whose wind is affected, and that they act mechanically and afford relief. I have been told of a man in Surrey who always took gunpowder when he was unwell, the saltpetre which it contained acting medicinally.

When children shed their first teeth, it is considered necessary to burn them; for if the cast-off teeth are destroyed in any other way, they will be succeeded by "cat's teeth."

There appears to have been almost universally a belief amongst the various nations, that certain days were more lucky and auspicious than others. We have still remains of the same notions in existence, not only amongst sailors, but in our rural parishes. Friday is considered unlucky, as being the day on which our Saviour suffered on the Cross. Sunday, on the other hand, is regarded as auspicious; and if persons have been ill and are become convalescent, they almost always, as an invariable rule, get up for the first time on Sunday. (Turner's *"Anglo-Saxons,"* vol. iii., p. 122, quotes an ancient Saxon saying to the effect that, if a man be born on a Sunday, he will live without trouble all his life. See *"Choice Notes,"* p. 171.)

A lady who has married, but who has not, by marriage, changed her maiden name, is the best of all doctors, since no remedy administered by her will ever fail to cure. (See *"Choice Notes,"* p. 181.) An old woman, who boasts that she was "born on the same day, and baptized on the same day, and married on the same day as her husband," and who did not change her name by marriage, has told me that she was much plagued afterwards by patients who came to consult her; and that she gave them pieces of bread, or cheese, or sugar, or any edible scraps that she had in her house.

HUGH PIGOTT.

Superstitions of Worcestershire.

[1855, *Part II.*, pp. 384-386.]

I send you some further notes regarding the superstitions of this county, in continuation of those which you published in your magazine for July. [See note 29.]

In parts of this county, and of Shropshire, the following occurrences are considered unlucky:

To meet a squinting woman, unless you talk to her, which breaks the charm.

To go a journey on a Friday.

To help another person to salt at table.

To be one of a party of thirteen at Christmas.

To have crickets in the house.

To have a female come into your house the first thing on New Year's morning. So generally does this absurdity prevail, that in many towns young lads make a "good thing of it" by selling their services to go round and enter the houses first that morning.

To have a cut onion lying about in the house breeds distempers.

To cross knives accidentally at meal times.

To walk under a ladder.

For the first young lamb you see in the season, or a colt, to have its tail towards you.

To kill a lady-cow (in Dorsetshire, called "God Almighty's cow").

To see the first of the new moon through a window, or glass of any sort, is also unlucky. But, if you see it in the open air, turn the money in your pocket, and express a wish for luck during the ensuing month; you are supposed to ensure it.

To have apples and blossoms on a tree at the same time, is a sign of a forthcoming death in the family.

To have a long succession of black cards (spades or clubs), dealt to a person while at play, is prophetic of death to himself or some member of the family.

When a corpse is limp, it is a sign that another death will happen in that house.

As to cutting your nails on a Sunday, the following couplet is very expressive:

Better a child was never born
Than cut his hoofs of a Sunday.

The itching of the nose is a sign of bad news; if the ear itches, you may expect news from the living; if the face burns, some one is talking about you; and when you shudder, a person is walking over the spot where your grave will be.

To leave a teapot lid open, undesignedly, is an indication that a stranger is coming; and when a cock crows in your doorway, or a bit

of black stuff hangs on the bar of the grate, it is a sign of a similar event.

A bit of coal popped from the fire must resemble either a purse or a coffin, and consequently good luck or death.

Tea-drinking is made to foreshadow a large number of the casualties of life, including the receipt of presents, the visits of strangers, obtaining sweethearts, and the like, merely from the appearance of the grounds.

A bright speck in the candle is a sure indication that a letter is coming to the individual to whom it points.

If the sun shines warmly on Christmas Day, there will be many fires in the ensuing year.

"A great year for nuts, a great year for children," is a common saying.

To present a friend with a knife, is supposed to have the effect of cutting off friendship.

A donkey braying is an infallible sign of rain.

To cut your hair during the increase of the moon, is said to insure its favourable growth.

The horse-shoe is still seen over doors in many places, and fastened to bedsteads, to keep witches away.

A pillow filled with hops, and laid under a patient's bed, is an undoubted cure for rheumatism.

In the rural districts, great faith is put in rings made of the shillings and sixpences given at the Sacrament, and many clergymen have told us of repeated applications having been made to them for Sacrament shillings, for the purpose of keeping away the evil spirit, or as a remedy for fits. Mr. Watson, in his "History of Hartlebury," says that he believes nearly every person in that district, who was subject to fits, wore such a ring; and there is another parish in the county, where, I am told, even Protestant poor go to the Romanist priest to have the relics of saints applied for the cure of diseases.

A superstition exists in some parts of the county, that if pieces of the alder tree are carried in the waistcoat pocket, they will be a safeguard against rheumatism. In Wyre Forest, near Bewdley, is a botanical curiosity, namely, the celebrated old *Pyrus domestica*, said to be the only tree of the kind growing wild in England. It is of the same kind as the "Rowan," or mountain ash, which was, and even now is, vulgarly worn as a remedy against witchcraft. It is much thought of by the common people, and there are various traditions concerning it. The name given to the tree is "the withy pear tree"—the mountain ash being also called "the withy tree," and the leaves of this tree are very similar. One of our Naturalists' Field Clubs visited it in August, 1853. Vegetation was then entirely confined to its top boughs, which, however, still held a few pears on them.

Charms are still believed in to a great extent among the poor. In

the neighbourhood of Hartlebury they break the legs of a toad, sew it up in a bag alive, and tie it round the neck of the patient. There were lately some female charmers at Fladbury. The peasantry around Tenbury and Shrawley have also great faith in charms, and the toad remedy is applied at the former place, the life or death of the patient being supposed to be shadowed forth by the survival or death of the poor animal. At Mathon, old women are entrusted with the cure of burns by charming, which they do by repeating a certain number of times the old doggrel rhyme, beginning,

"There were two angels came from the north," etc.

In the neighbourhood of Stoke Prior a charm was some time ago used by a labouring man for the removal of the thrush (or "throcks," as it is locally termed). He would put his finger into his mouth, and then into that of the child, rubbing the gums, while he mumbled out something terminating with "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," then put down the child without speaking another word, and leave the house without eating or drinking.

Omens, or tokens of death, adhere to the popular belief to a more general extent than any other relic of superstition, perhaps one-third of the population attaching more or less credit to them. It would be impossible to enumerate all these idle fancies; but among them are prominently the howling of a dog, a winding-sheet in the candle, and the issuing of light from a candle after it has been blown out.

J. NOAKE.

[1856, *Part I.*, pp. 38-40.]

The custom of burying exclusively on the south side of churchyards prevails very generally in the rural districts of this county, except where the smallness of the ground or the extent of the population have rendered it compulsory to use the north side, which, however, was formerly reserved for suicides and strangers. Many fanciful theories have been invented to account for this preference of the south side; but the most probable is, that as the principal entrance to the church was usually on that side, it was natural for burials to be there also, that the deceased might have the benefit (so accounted in those days) of the prayers of the congregation as they walked to and fro and beheld the inscriptions.

Mr. Allies tells us of a remarkable superstition that prevailed not many years ago at Suckley, where the country people used to talk a great deal about "The Seven Whistlers," and that they oftentimes at night heard six out of these seven whistlers pass over their heads, but that no more than six of them were ever heard at once, for when the seven should whistle together there would be an end of the world. This is supposed to have some reference to fairy lore, and is still believed by the Leicestershire colliers, who, when they hear "the whistlers," will not venture below ground, thinking that death to

some one is foreboded. The superstition has probably a German origin.

"Touching for the King's Evil" was, in old times, an established institution. In 1666 the Chamberlain of the Worcester Corporation spent £10 14s. in an entertainment to Mr. Greatrix, "an Irishman famous for helping and curing many lame and diseased people, only by stroking of their maladies with his hand, and therefore sent for to this and many other places." Valentine Greatrix, surnamed the Stroker, was a great proficient and master of the art; and by a letter of his (still in existence) to the Archbishop of Dublin, it appears that he believed himself to be inspired by God for the purpose of curing the disease. He was entertained with great hospitality at many of our citizens' houses, and was thus fortunate in having a long start of the mesmerizers of the present day. The parish register of Chaddesley-Corbett contains a "Mem. that Nov. 24, 1685, a certificate was granted to Gervase Burford to be touched for the King's Evil;" and two years later King James II. was at Worcester, and attended at the cathedral for the purpose of touching persons affected with the evil. This has been said to have been the last known instance of that superstition; but we believe that Dr. Johnson was "touched" by Queen Anne in 1712. [See *post*, pp. 165-175.]

Bells were formerly a prolific source of superstition. There is a valley in Nottinghamshire, where a village is said to have been swallowed up by an earthquake, and it was the custom on Christmas Day morning for the people to assemble in this valley and listen to the fancied ringing of the church-bells underground. At Abbot's Morton there is a tradition that the silver bells belonging to the abbot are buried in the site of his old residence there. At Ledbury, a legend relates that St. Katharine had a revelation that she was to travel about, and not rest at any place till she heard the bells ringing of their own accord. This was done by the Ledbury bells on her approaching that town. When the church at Inkberrow was rebuilt on a new site in ancient days, it was believed that the fairies took umbrage at the change, as they were supposed to be averse to bells; they accordingly endeavoured to obstruct the building, but as they did not succeed, the following lamentation was occasionally heard by the startled rustics:

"Neither sleep, neither lie,
For Inkbro's ting-tangs hang so nigh."

In many places in this county, when the master of a family dies, the old nurse goes to the hive of bees, knocks, and says:

"The master's dead, but don't you go;
Your mistress will be a good mistress to you;"

a bit of black crape is then pinned on the hive. It is firmly believed that but for this precaution the bees would all desert the place. A

correspondent at Pershore says, "While conversing with a farmer's wife in this neighbourhood, I was gravely informed that it was certainly the truth, unless the bees were 'told' when anybody died in the house, something would happen either to bees or honey before long. She considered it a great want of foresight not to go from the house in which the 'departed one' had breathed his or her last to the hive without delay, and 'tell the bees' what had happened." If a swarm of bees return to their old hive, it is believed that a death will happen in the family within the year. This superstition probably prevails nearly all over the Kingdom, and is believed to be of great antiquity.

In Oxfordshire, it is said that if a man and his wife quarrel, the bees will leave them. In Devonshire, the custom is (or was in the year 1790) to turn round the bee-hives that belonged to the deceased at the moment the corpse was being carried out of the house; and on one occasion, at the funeral of a rich farmer at Cullumpton, as a numerous procession was on the point of starting, a person called out, "Turn the bees;" upon which a servant, who had no knowledge of the custom, instead of turning the hives about, lifted them up, and then laid them down on their sides. The bees, thus invaded, quickly fastened on the attendants, and in a few moments the corpse was left quite alone, hats and wigs were lost in the confusion, and a long time elapsed before the sufferers returned to their duty.

Hot-cross-buns, or other bread made on a Good Friday, are supposed never to grow mouldy, and if kept for twelve months, and then grated into some liquor, will prove a great soother of the stomach-ache; acorns, dried and grated, will have the same effect.

The colliers at Dudley, in the event of a fatal accident to one of their number, all in the same pit immediately cease from working until the body is buried. A certain sum is also spent in drink, and is called dead money. The same custom, more or less modified, prevails in many districts.

The poorer people of Offenham will by no means allow any washing to be about on a Good Friday, which would be considered the fore-runner of much ill-luck.

In the year 1643, when some thieves plundered the house of Mr. Rowland Bartlett, at Castle Morton, among other things they took a "cock eagle stone, for which thirty pieces had been offered by a physician and refused." These eagle stones were ætites, a variety of argillaceous oxide of iron; they were hollow, with a kernel or nucleus, sometimes movable, and always differing from the exterior in colour and density. The ancients superstitiously believed that this pebble was found in the eagle's nest, and that the eggs could not be hatched without its assistance. Many other absurd stories were raised about this fossil. At Mathon, some people believe that if land is left unsown in a field there will be a death in the family within the year;

and when the accident is discovered they never sow it again. (See Mr. Watson's sketch of that parish.)

A lingering belief in witchcraft still remains among the ignorant of our population, both rural and urban. From the Townsend MSS. it appears that in 1660 one Joan Bibb, of Rushock, was tied and thrown into a pool, as a witch, to see whether she could swim; but the old lady resented this in a plucky manner, brought her action against "Mr. Shaw the parson," who appears to have been the principal instigator of the ducking, and made him pay £20—no trifling sum in those days. In the same year four persons were brought from Kidderminster to Worcester gaol, accused of exercising the black art, and of speaking against the King; they were all ducked in the Severn (Cooken Street, or "Cucken Street," as it is spelt in some old maps, being no doubt the line of route on these occasions). Only about ten or a dozen years after that we find a prebendary of Worcester (Joseph Glanville) seriously writing a book, entitled "Some Considerations touching the being of Witches and Witchcraft," which engaged him in a controversy that lasted as long as his life. The statute 9 George II., c. 5 (1736), at length repealed the disgraceful Witch Act, and stopped all legal prosecutions against persons charged with conjurations, sorcery, etc.; yet what has once taken so firm a hold of the popular mind is not to be so easily eradicated; and Dr. Nash, who wrote his "Worcestershire" towards the close of the last century, asserts that not many years previously a poor woman, who happened to be very ugly, was almost drowned in the neighbourhood of Worcester, upon a supposition of witchcraft; and had not Mr. Lyon, a gentleman of singular humanity and influence, interfered in her behalf, she would certainly have been drowned, upon a presumption that a witch could not sink. Later still, Mr. Allies informs us, that when the late Mr. Spooner kept a pack of hounds, whenever they passed through a certain field in Leigh Sinton, the hounds would invariably run after something which nobody could see, until they came to the cottage of an old woman named Coffield, when they would turn back again, the old witch having safely got into her own "sanctum."

The exploits of Mrs. Swan, of Kidderminster, who pretended to discover stolen property for everybody else except what she herself had lost, and who died in an awfully tempestuous night in November, 1850, when her cats so mysteriously disappeared, cannot yet be forgotten; nor the recent existence of the "Wise Man of Dudley," and many others of the same class, though not quite so celebrated, who are now living. Some of the Mathon people still believe that witchcraft makes their pigs waste away; and when convinced of the fact, they kill the animal, and burn a part of the flesh, to prevent any ill effects to those who eat the remainder.

Mr. Lee informs us of a pear-tree in Wye Forest, the fruit of which

is now hung up in the houses of the peasantry as a protection against witchcraft; and there is a place called "Witchery Hole" in Little Shelsey, concerning which, whenever a violent wind blows from the north, the people say, "The wind comes from Witchery Hole," insinuating that certain "broomstick hags" had something to do with raising the wind.

Yours, etc., J. NOAKE.

[1858, *Part II.*, p. 375.]

SUPERSTITION ON THE DEATH OF GREAT MEN.

A superstition prevails among the lower classes of many parts of Worcestershire, that when storms, heavy rains, or other elemental strifes, take place at the death of a great man, the spirit of the storm will not be appeased till the moment of burial. This superstition gained great strength on the occasion of the Duke of Wellington's funeral, when, after some weeks of heavy rain, and one of the highest floods ever known in this country, the skies began to clear, and both rain and flood abated. The storms which have been noticed to take place at the time of the death of many great men known to our history, may have had something to do with the formation of this curious notion in the minds of the vulgar. It was a common observation hereabout in the week before the interment of his Grace, "Oh, the rain won't give over till the Duke is buried."

WEATHER SAYINGS.

A Saturday's change, and a Sunday's full,
Once in seven years is once too soon.

If the moon changes on a Sunday, there will be a flood before the month is out.

Look at the weathercock on St. Thomas's day, at twelve o'clock, and see which way the wind is, and there it will stick for the next quarter.

Superstitious Origin of some of the English Laws.

[1822, *Part II.*, pp. 487, 488.]

Bred up an Englishman, and under the protection of the English Laws, I have ever been taught to consider them superior to the laws of other nations, as being founded alike in wisdom and lenity, for either of which causes I have considered them entitled to respect and veneration. To persons acquainted with the laws of the ancients, as well as those of the present day, it is quite manifest that the wisest laws in all ages have been intermixed with others equally ridiculous and absurd; I will not say absurd in their origin, but rendered so by time and circumstances; for instance, a law imposing a tax upon an article of great consumption, is wise, so long as the consumption

exists ; but when the consumption has ceased, either on account of the tax, or other circumstances, the continuance of the law is useless and absurd ; so likewise a law founded in superstition might have been well enough so long as the age of superstition lasted ; but when the age of superstition has passed away (as in England I trust it has), the continuation of such a law is palpably ridiculous and absurd. From the above considerations, I have been frequently surprised that the law respecting *forfeitures in cases of casual death*, usually termed "*deodands*," so truly superstitious and absurd, and yet so frequently acted upon, should be allowed to form part of the laws of the present day. "It seems (says a learned writer on this subject) to have been originally founded rather in the superstition of an age of ignorance, than in the principles of sound reason and policy." That it was founded in the superstition of an age of ignorance, is quite certain ; but that it was wanting of a political motive, is not, I think, quite so manifest, when we consider the purposes to which these forfeitures were applied. We may, I think, safely consider the law in question as having (in imitation perhaps of the Mosaic law*) been founded in the blind days of popish superstition, as an expiation for the souls of such as were snatched away by sudden death, in which I think the political motive is apparent, namely, for the purpose of enriching the revenues of the popish priests,

"Omnia quæ movent ad mortem sunt Deo danda."†

"What moves to death we understand,
Is forfeit as a Deodand."

The intention of the law seems to have been to create an abhorrence of murder (if we may so term it) by a forfeiture of the instrument or occasion of such death ; a law ridiculous enough in itself, but rendered still more so by the nice distinctions which have since, from time to time, been taken ; for instance, if a man by falling from the wheel of a cart *standing still*, be killed, the wheel *alone* is forfeited, as causing his death ; but if the same person, riding on the shafts of his cart, had fallen to the ground and broken his neck, the *cart and horses* were forfeited, and not the loading, which in no way contributed to his death ; but if, by the same fall, his death had been occasioned by the cart passing over him, then the horses, cart, and loading, would have been forfeited, because the weight thereof made the hurt the greater.

Again, where a cart, in endeavouring to pass a loaded wagon, was overturned, and a person was thereby thrown out before the wheels of the wagon which passed over him, whereby he was killed, it was resolved that the cart, wagon, loading, and horses, were all forfeited, for that they did all move, to the man's death. Now really one is shocked to think, that, when so far advanced as the Nineteenth

* Exod. xxi. 28.

† "Bracton," l. 3, c. v.

Century, such superstitious, trivial, and absurd questions should occupy the attention of our learned Judges; it is true, that in late years, whenever motions have been made on behalf of lords of franchises (to whom in most cases these forfeitures belong by grant), for the purpose of increasing the amount of Deodands, such motions have not met with great countenance in Westminster Hall. Added to the absurdity of the law, great hardship in most cases ensues, in consequence of the Jury measuring the amount of Deodand by the value of the animal or instrument causing the death, instead of fixing a nominal sum, by which the ends of the law would be fully answered. If, for instance, my servant is killed by my horse, in addition to the conscientious liability I am under of making some provision for his family (if he has any), I am obliged to pay such a sum for the ransom of my horse, as a Jury of superstition (for the nature of their oaths makes them so) shall think fit to impose. I repeat that the existence of such a law at the present day, as the one in question, is of itself sufficient to lessen the respect and draw down the contempt of sensible men upon the whole body of our laws. If the Legislature do not consider the subject as worthy of their interference, the Juries, who are impanelled on such occasions, should at least show their contempt of it by the amount of the Deodands, which in no case (for all cases are in this respect alike) should exceed *one farthing*. The length to which Juries are disposed to carry this absurd law, is shown in the following case, which happened but the other day, wherein two children were killed by the explosion of some gunpowder. The accident was certainly a very lamentable one, and the Jury, as an expression of their abhorrence of it, imposed a Deodand of ten pounds upon the gunpowder; but upon being informed by the Coroner, that, as the gunpowder had evaporated, there was nothing left whereon to levy, they withdrew the fine. After such an example, I think we cannot doubt but that a stop should be put to this absurd law. [See note 30.] I. A.

Mistletoe used in Churches.

[1792, p. 432.]

Your correspondent, p. 337, who has resigned his old signature of "Robin Hood," is, as I apprehend, not quite correct in his notion that mistletoe does not still adorn our churches at Christmas. It may not always be a concomitant with holly and ivy, but it seems to have been in general use when Gay published his "Trivia," who thus remarked (B. ii. 441, 442):

"Now with bright holly *all the temples* strow
With laurel green and *sacred mistletoe*."

Since his time I remember to have seen a large bough of this plant suspended under the arch of entrance into the chancel of a church

within the Bills of Mortality. The under-written articles are copied from the Churchwardens' accounts of the same parish.

	£	s.	d.
A. 1556. The charge for hole and ive against Christmas	0	0	6
A. 1631. Item, for holly and ivy	0	2	6
A. 1669. Dec. 28, paid for greens to beautify the church and putting them up	1	7	6

From the last charge it should seem that in 143 years there had been a much greater waste of holly and ivy in Norwood, than by the report of Mr. Nichols there has been of oak in the New Forest.

Yours, etc., ANTIQUARIOLUS.

Custom of Decorating Wells.

[1794, p. 115.]

In the village of Tissington in the county of Derby, a place remarkable for fine springs of water, it has been a custom, time immemorial, on every Holy Thursday, to decorate the wells with boughs of trees, garlands of tulips, and other flowers, placed in various fancied devices; and, after prayers for the day at the church, for the parson and singers to pray and sing psalms at the wells. I should be glad to be informed by any of your correspondents, what was the original of this custom, whether it is not handed down to us from the Druids, and whether they know of any other custom of the like kind in the kingdom.

Yours, etc., F.J.

[1794, p. 226.]

Your correspondent F. J. having given you a short account, p. 115, of the custom still prevalent at Tissington, in Derbyshire, of decorating the wells on Holy Thursday, please to inform him that it was antiently no uncommon practice; and two places in the county of Stafford instantly occurred to my recollection, viz., Brewood and Bilbrook, where the same custom was observed of late years, if not at the present time. And I believe the same kind of ornaments were used to decorate all Gospel-places, whether wells, trees or hills. In Popish times this respect was paid to such wells as were eminent for curing distempers upon the saint's day whose name the well bore, the people diverting themselves with cakes and ale, music and dancing; which was innocent enough in comparison of what had been formerly practised at different places, when even the better sort of people placed a sanctity in them, brought alms and offerings, and made vows at them, as the antient Germans and Britains did, and the Saxons and English were too much inclined to; for which St. Edmund's well, near Oxford, and St. Laurence's at Peterborough were once famous. This superstitious devotion, which was called well-worship, was not approved of by the heads of the Church, and was strictly prohibited by

our Anglican Councils : (1) Under King Edgar (Can. 16. in Lambard's Collection) ; (2) Under King Canute (in Spelman's Councils, tom. i. part ii. cap. 5) ; (3) In a council at London, under St. Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, 1102 (Labbe's Councils, tom. x.) ; as it was also particularly at those two wells near Oxford and at Peterborough by Oliver Sutton, Bishop of Lincoln.

S. SHAW, Jun.

[1794, p. 529.]

A correspondent in your Magazine for March mentions the custom of decorating wells ; and inquires whether there are any other wells, besides those in his account, which are accustomed to be ornamented. Near Newcastle, on the road to Benton, in my younger years, I have often observed a well with rags and tattered pieces of cloth hung upon the bushes around it. It is known, I presume, still by the name of the Rag Well. For the origin of the custom, as well as for a farther account of the rag well, I refer your correspondent to Brand's "Popular Antiquities," p. 85. [See *post*, p. 147.]

A SON OF THE TYNE.

[1823, *Part II.*, pp. 293-295.]

Throughout the whole of your valuable Magazine, there is no mention made of the ancient and annual custom of decorating, with flowers and boughs of trees, the wells at the village of Tissington, co. Derby. Various are the conjectures respecting this ceremony ; some supposing it to be the remains of a heathen worship, observed the four last days of April, and first of May, in honour of the goddess Flora, whose votaries instituted games called *Florales* or *Floralia*, to be celebrated annually on her birthday. But because they appeared impious and profane to the Roman Senate, which was the case, they covered their design, and worshipped Flora under the title of "Goddess of Flowers ;" and pretended that they offered sacrifice to her, that the plants and trees might flourish. While these sports were celebrating, the officers or *ædiles* scattered beans and other pulse among the people. These games were proclaimed and begun by sound of trumpet, as we find mentioned in Juvenal, Sat. 6 ; and had they been divested of obscene and lewd practices, so far from incurring censure, they would have handed down to posterity admiration at the innocent pastimes of the ancients, instead of regret, that such proceedings should have been countenanced by the great.

From the above being recorded, it is not unlikely that the custom originated, in some parts of England, of the youth of both sexes going into the woods and fields on the first of May, to gather boughs and flowers, with which they make garlands, and adorn their doors and windows with nosegays and artificial crowns. Triumphant thus in the flowery spoil, they decked also with flowers a tall pole, which they named the May-

pole, and which they placed in some convenient part of the village, and spent their time in dancing round it, consecrating it, as it were, to the Goddess of Flowers, without the least violation being offered to it through the circle of the whole year. Nor is this custom alone observed in England, but it is done in other nations, particularly Italy, where young men and maidens are accustomed to go into the fields on the Calends of May, and bring thence the branches of trees, singing all the way as they return, and so place them on the doors of their houses.

In the dark ages of Popery, it was customary, if wells were situated in lonely places, and the water was clear and limpid, having the grass flourishing close to its edge, to look upon it as having a medicinal quality; and accordingly it was given to some Saint, and honoured with his or her name, as St. John's, St. Mary Magdalen's, St. Mary's, St. Winefred's, St. Anne's. And Stow records that Fitzstephen, Monk of Canterbury, in his "Description of the ancient City of London," has these words:

"There are, on the North part of London, principal fountains of water, sweet, wholesome, and clear, streaming from among the glistening pebble stones. In this number, Holy Well, Clerken Well, and St. Clement's Well are of most note, and frequented above the rest, when scholars and the youth of the city take the air abroad in the summer evenings."

But I am inclined to think that this custom first originated among Christians, to commemorate the return of the spring, and also to show, that they ascribe praise and thanksgiving to God, for vouchsafing them such a return. The season chosen by the villagers of Tissington, to dress their wells, is on Ascension day. And this ceremony cannot fail to impress on the mind, that immortality is now secured to man, by the Ascension of Christ. The flowers used on this day may be emblematical of ourselves, and that though we may in the morning be full of life and health, yet the evening of life will come, when, like them, we must fade and droop; but not to be seen no more; for provided we are found worthy we shall ascend to the fields of eternal spring, to dwell for ever with Him who is gone up in triumph to His Father. The texts of Scripture, and other religious sentiments that are placed among the greens and flowers about these wells, together with the service solemnized at the Church, show the grandeur and sublimity of a Christian worship, and how different from those religious festivals of the Romans, called Fontanalia, in honour of the nymphs of their wells and fountains; when they threw nosegays into the Fountains, and put crowns of flowers upon the wells.

I will now proceed to give an exact account of the circumstances attendant on this annual festival, which was on the 8th of May, 1823, while I was on a visit at Ashburn, with my friend the Rev. Thomas Gibbs, second master of the Grammar School there, and curate of

Tissington. There are five wells, and the psalms appointed for morning service, with the Epistle and Gospel for the day, being omitted at Church, were read by Mr. Gibbs, one at each well, when a psalm was also sung by the parish choir. I officiated in the Church, and preached a sermon on the occasion, from 1 Peter, 3rd chap., former part of 22d verse.

The method of decorating the wells is this. The flowers are inserted in moist clay, and put upon boards, cut in various forms, surrounded with boughs of laurel and white-thorn, so as to give an appearance of water issuing from small grottoes. The flowers are adjusted and arranged in various patterns, to give the effect of mosaic work, having inscribed upon them texts of Scripture, appropriate to the season, and sentences expressive of the kindness of the Deity. They vary each year, and as the wells are dressed by persons contiguous to the springs, so their ideas vary. I copied the sentiments and texts from each, at the same time taking an account of the style in which the wells were dressed, and the patterns formed by the flowers.

From the Church, the congregation walked to the first, or the Hall Well, so called from being opposite to the house of the ancient family of Fitzherbert. Here was read the first psalm for the day, and another sung. As there is a recess at the back of the well, and an elevated wall, a great profusion of laurel branches were placed upon it, interspersed with daffodils, Chinese roses, and marsh-marygolds. Over the spring was a square board, surmounted with a crown, composed of white and red daisies. The board, being covered with moss, had written upon it in red daisies :

“While He blessed them He was carried up into heaven.”

The second, or Hand's Well. This was also surrounded with laurel-branches, and had a canopy placed over it, covered with polyanthuses. The words on the canopy were :

“The Lord's unsparing hand
Supplies us with this spring.”

The letters were formed with the bud of the larch, and between the lines were two rows of purple primroses and marsh marygolds. In the centre above the spring, on a moss ground, in letters of white daisies :

“Sons of earth
The triumph join.”

Beneath was formed in auriculas :

“G. R.”

The second psalm for the day was read here.

The third, or Frith's Well. This was greatly admired, as it was

situated in Mr. Frith's garden, and the shrubs around it were numerous. Here were formed two arches, one within the other. The first had a ground of wild hyacinths, and purple primroses, edged with white, on which was inscribed in red daisies, "Ascension."

The receding arch was covered with various flowers, and in the center, on a ground of marsh-marygolds, edged with wild hyacinths, in red daisies :

"Peace be unto you."

Here was read the third psalm for the day.

The fourth, or Holland's Well, was thickly surrounded with branches of whitethorn placed in the earth. This well springs from a small coppice of firs and thorns. The form of the erection over it was a circular arch, and in the center, on a ground of marsh-marygolds, edged with purple primroses, in red daisies, these words :

"In God is all."

At this well was read the Epistle.

The fifth, or Miss Goodwin's Well, surrounded with branches of evergreens ; having on a Gothic arch, covered with marsh-marygolds, daffodils, and wild hyacinths, the following in red daisies :

"He did no sin."

On the summit of the arch was placed a crown of laurel, over which was a cross of white daisies, edged with wild hyacinths ; on the transverse piece of the cross, "I. H. S." was placed, in red daisies. At this well was read the Gospel.

The day concluded by the visitors partaking of the hospitality of the inhabitants, and being gratified with a well-arranged band, playing appropriate pieces of music at each other's houses.

Yours, etc., R. R. RAWLINS.

Rag Wells.

[1823, *Part I.*, p. 18.]

The Rev. Mr. Brand, in his ingenious annotations on Bourne's "Popular Antiquities," mentions a well at Benton, similar to the well near the foot of Rosberrye Toppinge, between the towns of Aten and Newton, co. York, and dedicated to St. Oswald. In the opinion of the neighbours St. Oswald's well has a particular charm, which is this : that if a shirt or shift taken off a sick person is thrown into this well, it will show whether the person so sick will recover or die. If it floats, it denotes their recovery ; if it sinks, there remains no hope of their life. To reward the Saint for his intelligence, they tear off a rag of the shirt, and leave it hanging on the briars thereabouts,

"where," says the writer of the MS. in the Cottonian Library, marked Julius F. 6, "I have seen such numbers, as might have made a fayre rheme in a paper myll."* These rag-wells, as they are called, were formerly not uncommon. Mr. Pennant tells us of two in Scotland, which were visited for many distempers, and where the offerings were small pieces of money and bits of rags. [See *ante*, p. 143.]

Yours, etc., STEMMALYSMU.

Holy Wells in Cornwall.

[1819, *Part II.*, pp. 132.]

In Cornwall there are several wells which bear the name of some Patron Saint, who appears to have had a Chapel consecrated to him or her on the spot. This appears by the name of Chapel Saint—attached by tradition to the spot. These Chapels were most probably mere Oratories; but in the parish of Maddern there is a well called Maddern Well, which is inclosed in a complete Baptistry, the walls, seats, doorway, and altar, of which still remain. The socket, which received the base of the crucifix or pedestal of the Saint's image, is perfect. The foundations of the outer walls are apparent. The whole ruin is very picturesque, and I wonder that it is passed over in so slight a manner by all Cornish historians, and particularly by Dr. Borlase, who speaks merely of the virtues superstitiously ascribed to the waters. This neglect in Borlase is the more to be wondered at, as the ruin is situated in his native parish.—I was struck with being informed that the superstitious of the neighbourhood attend on the first *Thursday* in May to consult this oracle by dropping pins, etc. Why on the *Thursday*? May not this be some vestige of the day on which Baptisteries were opened after their being kept shut and sealed during Lent, which was on Maunday-*Thursday*? My informant told me that *Thursday* was the particular day of the week, though some came on the second and third *Thursday*. May was the first month after Easter, when the waters had been especially blessed; for then was the great time of baptism. When I visited this Well last week, I found in it a polianthus and some article of an infant's dress, which showed that votaries had been there.

After the sixth century, these Baptisteries were removed into the church.

SIMPLEX.

* Something like this is mentioned by Mr. Hanway, in his "Travels in Persia," vol. i., p. 177, where he says, "After ten days' journey, we arrived at a desolate caravansera, where we found nothing but water. I observed a tree with a number of rags tied to the branches: these were so many charms, which passengers coming from Ghilan, a province remarkable for agues, had left there, in a fond expectation of leaving this disease also on the same spot."

Divining Rods.

[1751, pp. 507, 508.]

**OBSERVATIONS ON THE PROPERTIES AND USE OF THE
VIRGULA DIVINA.**

So early as Agricola the divining rod was in much request, and has obtained great credit for its discovering where to dig for metals and springs of water; for some years past its reputation has been on the decline, but lately it has been revived with great success by an ingenious gentleman, who, from numerous experiments, hath good reason to believe its effects to be more than imagination, and to enable others to do the like, has laid down some short rules, as follows:

DIRECTIONS FOR CHUSING THE RODS.

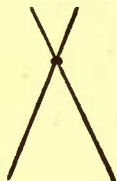
The hazel and willow rods, he has by experience found, will actually answer with all persons in a good state of health, if they are used with moderation, and at some distance of time, and after meals, when the operator is in good spirits.

The hazel, willow, and elm are all attracted by springs of water; some persons have the virtue intermittently, the rod in their hands will attract one half hour, and repel the next.

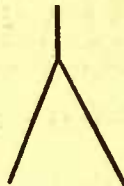
The rod is attracted by all metals, coals, amber, and limestone, but with different degrees of strength.

The best rods are those from the hazel or nut-tree, as they are pliant and tough, and cut in the winter months; a shoot that terminates equally forked is to be preferred, about two feet and a half long; but as such a forked rod is rarely to be met with, two single ones of a length and size may be tied together with thread, and they will answer as well as the other. The figure of each is here nearly represented:

Two rods tied together.

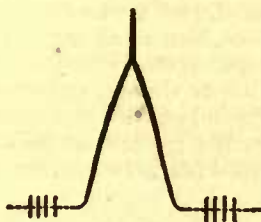


A twig that grows forked.



The most convenient and handy method of holding the rod is with the palms of the hands turned upwards, and the two ends of the rod coming outwards; the palms should be held horizontally as nearly as possible, the part of the rod in the hand ought to be straight, and not bent backward or forward. The upper part of the arm should

be kept pretty close to the sides, and the elbows resting on them; the lower part of the arm, making nearly a right angle with the upper, though rather a little more acute. The rod ought to be so held, that in its working the sides may move clear of the little fingers. The position of the rod when properly held is much like the figure annexed:



Where the distance between the four downward lines is the part that is supposed to be held in the hands.

The best manner of carrying the rod is, with the end prolaidd in an angle of about 80 degrees from the horizon, as by this method of carrying it the repulsion is more plainly perceived than if it was held perpendicularly.

But after all the directions that can be given, the adroit use of it can only be attained by practice and attention.

It is necessary that the grasp should be steady, for if, when the rod is going, there be the least succussion or counteraction in the hands, though ever so small, it will greatly impair and generally totally prevent its activity, which is not to be done by the mere strength of the grasp, for, provided this be steady, no strength can stop it.

PROPERTIES OBSERVED IN THE ROD, AND DIRECTIONS FOR USING IT.

As soon as the person's foremost foot comes near the attracting body (as far as I can observe, its semi-diameter) the end of the rod is repelled towards the face; then open the hands a little, replace the rod, and approach nearer, and the repulsion will be continued until the foot is on or over the attracting body.

When this is the case the rod will first be repelled a little, viz., 2 or 3 inches, and then be attracted towards the metallic body, *i.e.*, its end will be drawn down towards it.

When it hath been drawn down, it must not be thrown back without opening the hands, a fresh grasp being necessary to every attraction, but then the least opening of the hand is sufficient.

As long as the person stands over the attracting body the rod continues to be attracted, but as soon as the forefoot is beyond it, then the rod is drawn backward to the face.

Metals have different degrees of attraction; gold is strongest, next

copper, then iron, silver, tin, lead, bones, coals, springs of water, and limestone.

TO MAKE COMMON EXPERIMENTS.

Set the foot on a piece or coin of any of these metals, having the rod in your hands as before directed.

In using the rod to discover springs and metals, let the person hold the rod as already directed, and then advancing north or south with a slow pace, just one foot before the other, at first the rod may be repelled, but as the person advances slowly and comes over the spring or vein of ore, the rod will be strongly attracted.

A person who, by frequent practice and experience, can use the rod tolerably, may soon give the greatest sceptics sufficient satisfaction, except they are determined not to be convinced.

[1752, p. 77.]

To what has been asserted concerning the *Virgula Divinatoria*, in your Mag. for November, 1751, p. 507, you may add the following relation, as it rests upon the authority of the very eminent Dr. Linnæus, physician in ordinary to the present King of Sweden :

M. Linnæus, when he was upon his voyage to Scania, hearing his Secretary highly extol the virtues of his divining wand, was willing to convince him of its insufficiency, and for that purpose concealed a purse of one hundred ducats under a ranunculus which grew by itself in a meadow, and bid the Secretary find it if he could. The wand discovered nothing, and M. Linnæus's mark was soon trampled down by the company who were present ; so that when M. Linnæus went to finish the experiment by fetching the gold himself, he was utterly at a loss where to seek it. The man with the wand assisted him, and pronounced that it could not lie the way they were going, but quite the contrary ; so pursued the direction of his wand, and actually dug out the gold. M. Linnæus adds that such another experiment would be sufficient to make a proselyte of him.

CURIOSUS.

[1819, Part I., p. 620.]

In reading the *British Critic* for April, 1815, I met with a Review of Dr. Hutton's "Recreations in Mathematics and Natural Philosophy." I was much struck with some remarks (p. 415) on a subject to me entirely new, viz., "the divining rod ;" the passage runs thus :

"There is a peculiar property, it would appear, residing in certain constitutions, which enables the possessor, upon taking a hazel or some other twig, to discover a spring below the surface of the earth. Upon the arrival of the person endowed with this faculty, upon a spot where water is to be found, the twig will be found to twist itself in the hand. Upon a bridge, or in a boat, no effect is perceived ; the water must be under ground to produce the phenomenon." Dr.

Hutton gives an account of a lady who, in consequence of an article in a former edition of his translation of 'Montucla,' sent a message to him, offering to show an instance of this extraordinary faculty in her own person.

If any of your numerous readers can throw any light upon this singular subject, they will greatly oblige

Yours, etc., CLERICUS BEDFORDIENSIS.

[1819, *Part II.*, p. 132.]

Reading in your last Magazine that Dr. Hutton, in his "Recreations in Mathematics," had said something about the Divining Rod, I beg leave to say, that about seven years ago, I was building a house upon a hill of limestone, where there was little probability of getting a spring of water; and a farmer having just left me, with whom I was in treaty for the purchase of a piece of land, my bailiff, who was with me, observed that the farmer was celebrated as a famous Dewster, and could find out a spring of water, if there was one. I asked him what he meant by a Dewster. He replied, that by using a rod or twig of hazel, he could find out a spring of water. Having before heard of the Divining Rod, and having little faith in it, I desired him to run after the farmer, which he immediately did; and the farmer told me, if I could get him a hazel rod he could easily find a spring of water, if there was one. Having procured a rod for the farmer, who, holding it in both his hands, and bending it into a bow, traversed for some little time a likely spot of ground, a little way from the house, and presently said there was a spring of water or *goods*, in a particular spot. I asked him what he meant by *goods*? he said lead ore, or calamy (*lapis calimmaris*). I desired him to inform me how he knew there were water or *goods*, and he replied, by the rod of hazel forcibly bending in his hands. I requested him to show me how to hold the rod, which he did; and I traversed the spot several times before I found any pressure on the rod: but, after directing me several times how to hold it, I at last found a very considerable pressure on the rod, whenever I went over a particular spot of ground, and I could scarcely keep the rod in my hands. This convinced me that there was some truth in it, and I ordered a shaft to be dug on the spot; and after going down three or four yards, the man came to some old workings of lead ore; but there was no water. On conversing with the farmer on the subject, he offered to lay me a bet that he would put 20 hats in a row, at some distance from each other, and under one of them I should put a dollar, and that he would point out the hat under which the dollar was; but I did not accept his bet. He further told me that a steel rod was as good or better than the hazel rod; and that it was a general practice among the miners on the Mendip Hills to find out veins of calamy (*lapis calimmaris*) and lead by the rod.

Yours, etc., JOHN R. LUCAS.

[1819, *Part II.*, p. 215.]

Having lately witnessed an experiment made by a lady who imagines that she has the power of discovering subterraneous springs by means of the Divining Rod, and shortly afterwards finding that I possessed that *extraordinary* property myself, I take the liberty of answering a query on that subject, which appeared in a late number of the *Gentleman's Magazine*; and proceed to give directions for the benefit of persons desiring to make the experiment. Take a fresh hazel-twigg, forked similar to the prongs of a hay-fork, about one foot in length, and sufficiently flexible to be twisted, which must be done by holding the two prongs rather tightly in your closed hands, allowing the ends to project a little beyond your little fingers; when so held, its own elasticity, and tendency to return to its former unrestrained position, will cause it gradually to untwist itself, in doing which it will move upwards or downwards without the least motion of the hands.

So gentle, and almost imperceptible is the twist required, that it is very possible for persons to deceive themselves (which I am confident was the case with the lady whom I saw, and which had almost been so with myself). Dr. Hutton's recantation of his former incredulity on this subject, and my own experience, convince me that it is also very easy to deceive others.

The experiment succeeds best with twigs from those trees of which the bark is rather rough, such as hazel, apple, etc., as they afford a firmer hold. They are not so fit for the use of the diviner in winter, or when dry, being then less flexible. The idea of its not succeeding on a bridge, or in a boat, is erroneous. (See note 31.)

W.

Mine-Knockers.

[1795, *Part II.*, pp. 559, 560.]

The subject treated of in the following letter is so extraordinary, that it is to be wished gentlemen who live near mines would enquire into the matter, and inform us whether the idea of these invisible beings is general throughout the kingdom amongst labourers employed underground, or whether this superstitious opinion is confined only to the Welsh miners.

PERIS.

LETTER FROM LEWIS MORRIS, ESQ., TO HIS BROTHER, WILLIAM MORRIS, COMPTROLLER OF THE CUSTOMS, HOLYHEAD.

October 14, 1754.

"DEAR BROTHER,

"Pray let me know the truth of the report, that Huw Llwyd (Hugh Lloyd) throws sticks at Newhaven; pray enquire closely into the affair: I do not think it impossible but the aërial part of such a fellow may be condemned to act like a fool, who so long acted the

knave. I have heard it affirmed by very sober men in Merionethshire, that Mr. Wynne, of Ystumllyn, can do some surprising things, which we call supernatural, by producing the appearances of distant persons ; not that they are, perhaps, really above nature, but that they are done by some means that are not commonly known, or that can be accounted for ; as electricity and magnetism are secrets of that kind, though really natural. Be so good as to let me know the common opinion of people in your parts about Mr. Wynne, and whether he really performed those things before sober, sensible, sedate men. I am not over credulous about those things ; and scepticism is madness ; for, we really know (in general) very little or nothing in comparison to what is to be known. The great Lord Bacon owns it ; and that temper of mind in him brought him to enquire into the depth of Nature beyond any man that was born before him. People who know very little of arts or sciences, or the power of Nature (which, in other words, are the powers of the Author of Nature), being full of conceit of their own abilities and knowledge, will laugh at us Cardiganshire miners, who maintain the existence of Knockers in mines, a kind of good-natured impalpable people, but to be seen and heard, and who seem to us to work in the mines ; that is to say, they are types, or forerunners, of working in mines, as dreams are of some accidents which happen to us. The barometer falls before rain and storms. If we did not know the construction of it, we should call it a kind of a dream that foretells rain ; but we know it is natural, and produced by natural means comprehended by us. Now, how are we sure, or anybody sure, but that our dreams are produced by the same kind of natural means ? There is some faint resemblance of this in the sense of hearing ; the bird is killed before we hear the report of the gun. However this is, I must speak well of these Knockers, for they have actually stood my very good friends, whether they are ærial beings called spirits, or whether they are a people made of matter not to be felt by our gross bodies, as air and fire and the like. Before the discovery of Esgair y Mwyn mine, these little people (as we call them here) worked hard there day and night ; and there are abundance of honest sober people who have heard them, and some persons who have no notion of them or of mines either ; but, after the discovery of the great ore, they were heard no more. When I began at Llwyn Llwyd, they worked so fresh there for a considerable time, that they even frightened some young workmen out of the work. This was when we were driving levels, and before we had got any ore ; but, when we came to the ore, then they gave over, and I heard no more talk of them. Our old miners are no more concerned at hearing them blasting, boring holes, landing deads, etc., than if they were some of their own people ; and a single miner will stay in the work, in the dead of night, without any man near him, and never think of any fear or harm that they will do him ; for, they have a notion that the knockers are of their own tribe and profession, and

are a harmless people who mean well. Three or four miners together shall hear them sometimes ; but, if the miners stop to take notice of them, the Knockers will also stop ; but, let the miners go on at their own work, suppose it is boring, the Knockers will go on as brisk as can be in landing, blasting, or beating down the loose ; and they were always heard a little from them before they came to ore. These are odd assertions, but they are certainly facts, though we cannot and do not pretend to account for them. We have now very good ore at Llwyn Llwyd, where the Knockers were heard to work, but have now yielded up the place, and are no more heard. Let who will laugh, we have the greatest reason to rejoice, and thank the Knockers, or rather God, who sends us these notices.

"This topick would take up a large volume to handle properly ; and I wish an able hand would take the task upon him to discuss the point, perhaps some extraordinary light into Nature might be struck out of it. The word 'supernatural,' used among us, is nonsense ; there is nothing supernatural ; for, the degrees of all beings, from the vegetative life to the archangel, are natural, real, absolute creatures, made by God's own hand ; and all their actions, motions, and qualities, are natural. Doth not the fire burn a stick into ashes as natural as the air or water dissolve salt ? and yet fire, when out of action, is invisible and impalpable ; but where is the home or country of fire ? where also is the home and country of Knockers ? I am, dear brother, yours affectionately,

"LEWIS MORRIS."

Ancient Book of Medical Recipes.

[1835, *Part II.*, pp. 31-36.]

About twenty years since, I procured several curious MSS. from a mass of papers which had belonged to Mr. William Pickering, an apparitor of the Consistory Court, at Durham ; and among these was a neatly written folio book, with the title-page, "EDWARD POTTER. ijs. iiij^d. HERE BEGINNETH A Booke of Phisicke and Chirurgery, with divers other things necessary to be knowne, collected out of sundry olde written bookes, and broughte into one order. The several things herein contayned may bee seene in the bookes and tables following. Written in the year of our Lorde God, 1610." The work commences with a list of the "thirty-three evil days" of the year, and a general calender ; and on folio 2 has "A catalogue of all my books, and the prices they cost me, taken by me, Edward Potter, ye 30 of November, 1594." This catalogue is in a different hand and ink to the rest of the book. Then follows seven folios, under the running title of "A Prognostication," which is a curious medley of rules about the weather, and astronomical calculations. "The first booke" begins on folio 11, a. and has this title—"A cōpye of all suche Medicines wherew^t the

noble Countisse of Oxenford most charitably, in her owne person, did manye great and notable Cures upon her poore Neighbours." "The second booke," beginning on folio 19, is entituled, "Here beginneth a true cople of such Medicines wherewt Mrs. Johan Ounsteade, daughter unto the worshipfull Mr. John Olliffe, Alderman of London, hath cured and healed many forlorne and deadlye diseases." "The thirde booke" begins on folio 48, b. and consists of "pretty conceates of Cookery, as baked meats, gellies, conserves, sugar-plates, and others." "The fourthe booke," on folio 60, is headed, "Here followeth a booke which was founde in the Parson's study of Warlingham, written in the Roman hande, and it wanteth both the beginning and ending." "The fiftie booke" contains "Certayne medicines which were taken out of the vicar of Warlingham's booke, beinge, as he sayde, taught him by the fayries;" and as specimens of the whole, I have, Mr. Urban, made the following extracts, supposing that many of your readers, unacquainted with the practice of medicine in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, may find amusement, in perusing and contrasting them with the science that guides the medical practitioners of the present day.

1. To staunche bloude.

"There were three Maryes went over the floude;
The one bid stande, the other stente [*sic*] bloude:
Then bespake Mary that Jesus Christ bore,
Defende gods forbod thou shouldeste bleede anye more."

The three Marys here named were probably the Virgin Mary, the Egyptian Mary, and Mary Magdalene. Whether this is to be spoken as an exorcism, or worn as a charm, is not mentioned. The custom of wearing charms was probably adopted by the Christians from the phylacteries of the Jews, which were little cubical boxes, or as the word means, conservatories, of a cubical form, sewed upon long fillets, at given distances, each made of parchment, and containing a roll with portions of the law written upon it. They were worn chiefly on the left arm, or wrist, and wound round and round it.

I formerly knew a Dutch Jew, who left his lodgings, and staying from them a more than usual time, his hostess sent for another Jew, his friend, who, knowing that he had been dispirited on account of the embarrassed state of his circumstances, immediately began to dread, that in his despondency, he had destroyed himself, and was soon confirmed in the conjecture, from finding that he had left his philactery behind him—a thing a Jew never does. His body was found a few days after in the river Wear. The philactery and his Bible I purchased, and found the former all made of parchment, as I have described. I loved the man for his most amiable, charitable disposition, as well as from his critical knowledge in the Hebrew language; but I will not mention his name, lest some one, consulting a disciple

of the magicians of Egypt, take upon him to call upon his name, and disturb the repose of his soul.

3. To take away frekels.—Take the bloude of an hare, anyonte them with it, and it will doe them awaye.

Either hares are scarce in the Highlands of Scotland, or this remedy is unknown there, or the Gaelic beauties find freckles killing, for certainly they seem to take little pains to remove them. The fairies delighted in the crimson drops i' th' bottom of a cowslip; and of the fairy queen we are told that

“The cowslips tall her pensioners be;
In their gold coats spots you see;
Those be rubies, fairy favours;
In those freckles live their savours.”

The Highland shepherd sees as many captivating charms in the freckles of “the lonely sun-beams” of his love, as the queen of the fairy troop, that built the magic hill of Tomnaheurich in a night, saw in the sun-spots of her favourite flower, before the unhallowed plough tore up the meadows of her pride on the northern border of the Ness.

4. For a man or a woman that hath lost their speeche.—Take wormewoode, and stampe it, and temper it with water, and strayne it, and with a spoone doe of it into their mouthes.

How many men would like to be in a condition to try the efficacy of this remedy, with the hope that it might prove unsuccessful! Lay an ointment on a speechless woman's tongue! Who dares to stand the torrent of eloquence it would most certainly produce?

6. A very sure and perfect remedye to cure a man, etc., of the pestilence; and some there hath bene that have bene cured in a night; the same remedye is also good for God's markes, boyles, carbuncles, blotches, etc. and such like, as St. Anthony's fire, etc.—Take the seed or berryes of ivye that groweth on trees or walls, and not of that which is founde lowe by the ground: you must gather the sayde berryes very ripe, and of those that growe towards the north, if it be possible; if not, then take them as you can get them, although they be not very ripe; dry them in the shadowe, and keepe them in a boxe of wood, as you do presious things; if any bee infected with the pestilence, take of the sayde berries, and beate them to powder in a fayre mortar, and then give the sicke of the sayde powder in a glasse of white wine, so much as will lye on a groate or more; then rub him in his bed, and make him sweate well; this done, change his sheets, shirte, and other coverings of his bed, if it may bee; if not, let him at the leaste change his shirte and sheets. Some have taken of the sayd powder overnichte, and have founde themselves in the morninge very well, so that they rose up, and clothed themselves, and walked about the house, and finally were throughe cured.

To these wonder-working properties of ivy-berries, we may add some of the plant, from "Bartholome," a Franciscan friar, of the family of the Earls of Suffolk, who set forth his book "*De Proprietatibus Rerum*," in 1360; and he says that it "is full wonderfull in knowledge and assaieng of wine; for it is certain y^t if wine meddled with water be in a vessel of ivie, y^e wine fleeteth over y^e brink, and the water abideth." "And there is a manner-ivie, and deaw falleth on the leaves thereof, and waxeth gleymie, & turneth to glewe;" concerning which, Batman, in his additions to the text of our author, says, "the gum of ivy killeth lice and nits, and being laid to it, taketh away hair. It is unwholesome to sleepe under the ivie, or in an ivie-bush. It maketh the head light and dizzie." Malkin, in his "*South Wales*" [1804, 4to], says that the stem of the ivy, on the north side of the castle of St. Anthan's, is five feet in girth, and in some years yields large quantities of gum; so that it may be certainly had of size sufficient to make vessels for assaying wine, and its gum, if of any use, obtained. Its berries have long held some repute as sudorifics; and I have seen it somewhere said that the powder of them was actually given with great success in vinegar, or white wine, in the great plague in London; though it may be doubted whether the healing virtue was not more in the vehicle than in the powder of the ivy-berries. Bartholomew's account of ivy-vessels being used for assaying wine is from Pliny, who says if the wine be mixed with water, the wine sokes through the wood, but the water remains.

8. To make a pretious water that Doctor Steuens did greate cures with, and kepte it secret tyll a little before his death, then taughte it to the Archbishop of Canterbury.—Take a gallon of white Gascoigne wine, ginger, gallingall, cynamon, nutmegs, graynes, cloves, annis seeds, fennell seedes, carraway seedes, of every of them like much, viz., a dram of each; then take sage, red mintes, red roses, time, pelltory of the wall, rosemarye, wilde time, and gromell, lavender (the flowers if you can get them), of every of them an handfull; then beate the spices small, and the hearbes allso; then put them all in y^e wine, and let it stand therein twelve houres, stirringe it divers times; then still it in a lymbecke; and the first water being greene, put it by itselfe, for it is the best; the second water being white, is good, but not so good as the first; put that by itselfe; it is good for all manner of diseases, to drinke it fasting, and at nighte laste, at every time a spoonefull; it is a presious and noble water, for a spoonefull is a preservative.

This, no doubt, was a precious cordial for the days it was in use. But we question whether water made of wine and spices, however skilfully combined, or slowly or coldly drawn, was half so exhilarating as ratafia or golden cordial, or eau-de-Cologne, or Geneva's famous water of juniper. We have never yet discovered the recipe for making the water of the gods, or seen a diagram of the "lymbecke" in which

it was distilled ; but we are certain that the Moors did no good to the beverage of Western Europe, when they brought with them into Spain the Egyptian art of distillation. Henry Earl of Cumberland, who was born in 1517, and died in 1564, was, according to the Pembroke Memoirs, "much addicted to alchemy and chemistry, and a great distiller of waters." Pindar was very right when he said "Water is the best."

13. To make an akeing tooth fall out.—Take wheate meale, and mixe therewith the milke of the hearbe called spurge, and make thereof past or doughe, with which ye shall fill the hollowe of the tooth, and let it be there a certayne time, and the tooth will fall out of it selfe. Also, if you washe your month and teeth once a mouth with wine wherein the root of this hearbe hath bene sodden, you shall never have payne in your teethe.

There can be no doubt but the caustic quality of the juice of almost every species of spurge, especially of *Euphorbia peplis*, applied to the human teeth, will corrode them rapidly. From its likeness to cream and its severely acrid nature, the Irish call the plant that produces it the "devil's churn." In England, from its being used to destroy warts, it is called *wart-wort*. Turner, the father of English botany, uses the name under *peplis*, and speaks of the burning taste of the sea-wart-wort which he saw growing in an island near Venice. Gerard also, who built his Herbal on foundations laid by Turner, tells of the horribly acrid quality of *sea-spurge*, which he experienced in company with Turner's ancient friend, Master Rich, in a walk along the sea-coast, near Lee, in Essex.

15. For him that hath naturally a red face.—Take foure ownces of the kyrnells of peaches, and three ownces of gorde seedes, and make thereof an oyle, wherewith you shall anoynte his face morninge and eveninge ; this will kill and destroye all redness. A thinge founde true by experience.

This recipe, if it was intended for the benefit of the fair sex, as well as of the gentlemen, might be found to furnish a very acceptable cosmetic for the toilettes of the blooming beauties of the country, who long to exchange the rosy hues of Hebe for the wan enchantments that lighten in the smiles of loveliness in fashionable life. We doubt its efficacy in removing the roseate hues that the liquor of cogniac suffuses over the face, much less in dimming the splendour of the crops of jewels that brandy produces on certain promontories, and, as their name implies, "shine in the dark, like a lighted coal."

19. To make the face fayre.—Take the blossomes of beanes, and distill them, and wash the face in that water, and it will be fair.

"The blossoms of beans!" Who that is enamoured of the fields and nature, has not inhaled their delicious Persian perfume ; and has not been struck with the blackness of the beauty-spot on their corollæ? We certainly recommend a place on the toilette of the fair for this

delicious water, as the perfumer, on distillation, will really find that it retains the fragrance of the flower ; which we, however, do not suspect of yielding an essential oil, and consequently are not sanguine in our hopes of seeing the water of bean-flowers rivaling the ottar of roses.

21. To take away warts.—When you kill a pigge, take the hot bloude, and washe the wartes, and let it drye on them ; then presentlye after wash them, and they shall be whole.

Whoever practised this receipt with success, mixed the pig's blood with some matter, which he kept a secret ; for, though we never tried the experiment, we are sure that blood, as it flows warm and unadulterated from an animal, can have no manner of effect in removing warts, or any other schirrhous tumour ; but warm blood is a convenient vehicle for a quack to use in working medical miracles.

22. To remedye baldnes of the heade.—Take a quanty of Suthern-woode, and put it upon kindled coales to burne ; and being made into powder, mix it with the oyle of radishes and anoynte the balde place, and you shall see great experiences.

What is here meant by "experiences ?" Changes ? A new growth of hair, or a natural *wig* ? Johnson is not quite right when he says that *why* is one of the meanings of *whig*. He should have said *sour whey* ; for till within the last forty years we remember a very agreeable summer beverage called *whey-whig*, being used by the people of Westmoreland, and made of whey with savoury herbs, such as mint, balm, and time, steeped in it, till it became slightly sour, and impregnated with the essential oil of the herbs. Of milk and whey they also said that it was gone, wented, *whigged*, or *changed* when it had turned sour. The word *wig*, as applied to an artificial covering of hair, has also that application, from a *wig* being a substitute or change for natural hair. And *wig* and *wigh*, in composition in the names of towns, means new or changed, and in some instances, as in its application to the Godmundingaham of Bede, Wighton means the idol's town, because idols were substitutes. If ointment of the oil of radishes, and the ashes of southern, should be found still to possess the virtue of covering bald heads with a crop of natural hair, how many elderly gentlemen, dear Mr. Urban, will be congratulating themselves with its delightful "experiences," after you kindly communicate to them this charming prescription !

30. A good drinke for them that are bewitched or forespoken.—Take rosemary three braunches, two leaves of comfrye, halfe a handfull of succorye, halfe a handfull of tyme, three braunches of hearbe-grace, a quarte of running water, and seeth it tyll it be half consumed, and then strayne it. And then take one nutmegge, and one race of ginger, one pennyworth of mace, and two pennyworth of suger, and put them into the water, and drinke thereof first and laste a quantity

at a time, warme ; and eate five almondes everye time after you have drunke of the water.

Fasting, they say, makes men acquainted with the unseen world ; and no necromancer can have communication with the spirit of the dead, or do his unearthly works of witchery, without both he and the persons who employ him have spent a long time in fasting. We cannot tell how the wizzards do, but many believe that no man will see ghost or spirit, or think himself bewitched or forespoken, who is in health to eat and drink as he ought ; and as the stomachic here recommended may have the effect of producing a healthy digestion and sound sleep, it is possible that it may be good for persons who think themselves possessed and bound in the spells of witchery. The accounts we hear of the command that the magicians of Egypt have over the spirits of the dead, and the communion that the fasting seers of Thebes enjoy with good spirits, will, we hope, be soon given to the world through the press. We will, however, briefly tell some few particulars, which we have heard respecting a magician at Cairo, and he and many others in that ancient country are now well known to many travellers both from England and from France. He came to any place he was sent for, and performed his feats in a private room, or in the open air, as he might be requested. He had no machinery or apparatus of any kind with him, except a fire and incense. His first request was that you would bring him a boy of twelve or thirteen years old—any that you chose ; and he poured upon the palm of the boy's hand a blotch of common black writing ink. He then muttered certain prayers, and threw perfumes into the fire ; and said to the boy, "Call the seven flags," which being done, he asked, "Now how many do you see?" Perhaps "None," was the answer. "Look again." "Oh, I see one, two, three, four." "What is their colour?" "Red, blue, etc." "Now I see one, two, three more." This preparatory ceremony being completed, the prayers were renewed, and fresh incense cast upon the fire. "Now," said the magician to the boy, "Call the sacred bull." "The sacred bull," the boy exclaimed, and he was asked what he now saw. "I see a great many people leading forth a bull. Now they are preparing to sacrifice him. Now they are eating him." This procession being past, the boy was told to call for the Sultan. The Sultan at the call appeared, attended with a troop of horsemen, and himself riding upon a splendid black charger, from which he alighted, and ascended a throne, his court falling off on each side in the form of a crescent. All these preparatory incantations being duly performed, the conjurer said to me, "Now ask for what you choose, for anything lost, or any person dead or alive, and the boy will see them on the ink-spot in his hand and describe them to you." One of the party had lost some jewelry, and on asking for it, the boy said it was on the person of one of the party, who confessed he had it, and that he had taken and kept it by

way of a joke. Many illustrious dead were invoked, and the boy invariably described them as appearing to him in the costume of the age and nation to which they belonged. One of the party asked for a friend who had been some time dead ; and he was described as appearing with both his arms, of which the magician was told he had lost one long before he died. "That might be," was the answer ; "but all who come at our command, come perfect persons, as God created them." We cannot lengthen this note, except by exclaiming—Happy long forgotten dead, who escaped from this world in that blessed obscurity which exempts your repose from being disturbed by the earthly agents of evil spirits ! Wretched, ye wise and mighty of the dead, whose names are emblazoned on the pages of history, and whose spirits are subject to be touched with madness, and tormented with devils, to gratify the curiosity of those idle and unfeeling, who not only ransack the graves, but harass the souls of their forefathers ! What would Henry Cornelius Agrippa say to all this ? Formerly men went to get instructions in magic of the devil, in certain caves in the neighbourhood of Toledo, in Spain. Now it is found that the art, as known in the first stages of the world, was never lost in Egypt.

54. A medicine against all manner of infirmitys.—Take and drink a cupfull of the juice of betonye, the first Thursday in May, and he shall be delivered from all manner of diseases for that yeare.

An annotator on the margin calls this "a piece of foolish witchcraft."

63. A confection for one that cannot eate well.—Take the juice of fennell two partes, and the third of honye, and seeth them together tyll it be as thick as honye, and put pepper to it, and take everye day fasting two or three spoonefulls thereof, etc.

71. For to get a stomache.—Take rosa solis halfe a pinte, rose water halfe a pinte, a quarter of a pinte of dragon water, and two spoonefulls of sallet oyle, and halfe a pinte of wormewood water, and one nut megge beaten to powder ; boyle all these together a little while, and after that take five leaves of liverworte, of lungworte three leaves, and two races of ginger beaten to powder, and put these to the foresayde and drinke of it, eveninge and morninge, twoe spoonefulls at a time, five dayes together.

Indolence and sickly constitutions gave people bad appetites formerly as well as now. The prescriptions for getting a good appetite abound in the manuscript we are quoting from. But beside the indolent, who will not take exercise to create a desire for food, and the sickly, to whom Nature has denied the pleasure of eating, how many gourmands are there who, instead of eating to live, live to eat, and are constantly exciting the rapacity of medical advice by fees for tonics, stimulants, and dinner pills ?

78. For one that is or will be drunken.—Take swallowes and

burne them, and make a powder of them; and give the drunken man thereof to drinke, and he shall never be drunken hereafter.

We recommend this recipe to the consideration and patronage of the Temperance Societies. What the appearance, the constituent parts, or the taste of the ashes of a swallow may be, we know not, for we have neither seen, analysed, nor tasted a specimen of them. But if they would cure drunkenness, the swallows of drink would certainly decrease, however gnats might increase in the fens of England, or midges in the moors of Scotland, by the increased demand for swallows. Man settles in marshes, and takes drams and tobacco to correct the effects of the bad air he lives in; and swallows haunt fens and water-sides for the winged insects they produce, so that for a considerable part of the year, from the latter end of April to some time in September, the sots that inhabit straths, and moors, and marshy sea-side countries, may easily obtain ashes of swallows to cure them of the malady of drinking.

102. To cause hair to growe.—Take the water of flower-de-leuce, and washe thy heade therewith, and it shall cause hayre to growe. Also the water of rosemary hath the same vertue. If thou wash thy head with the same water, and let it drye on agayne by itselfe, it causeth hayre to growe if thou be balde.

This may prove a desirable cosmetic to elderly dandies. We can, however, safely aver that the fairies communicated no piece of idle superstition to the Vicar of Warlingham when they affirmed that water of rosemary was good for the hair, for it nourishes and refreshes it much.

104. For one that hath loste his minde.—Take and shave off the hayre of the *moulde* of his heade, then take archangell and stampe it, and binde it to his heade where it is shaven, and let him take a sleep therewithall, and when he awaketh he shall be righte weake and sober enough.

Philips gives as one meaning of mould, "the dent in the upper part of the head;" and Ainsworth renders in Latin, "the mould of the head," by *Sutura*. Johnson had not found an example of the word. It were well if shaven scalps, covered with a plaster of archangel, were for a while made fashionable in certain political circles.

[1835, *Part II.*, pp. 150-151.]

114. To do away the webbes in the eye.—Take cuttelbanus and put it in an earthen pot full, and stoppe it rounde aboute with claye, and burne it tyll it be powder, and then breake it and serge it small, and put it into the eye, and it breakes awaye the webbe: and it cleares the eyes: this hath bene proved.

What is Cuttelbanus? the bones of the cuttle fish.

119. To comforte the braine.—Take and drinke one ounce and an halfe of rosewater mixed with white wine, both comforteth and

strengtheneth the brain, and maketh it courageous, and comforteth all the substance of the harte.

This is a harmless dram, better far for the health than "the water of life," compounded of wine and spices, which in the 3rd book is directed to be stilled in a lymbecke "well polymed," and with a softe fire.

145. A good oyntment against the vanities of the heade.—Take the juice of wormewoode and salte, honye, waxe, and incens, and boyle them together over the fire, and therewith anoynte the sick heade and temples.

I wonder under what meaning Johnson would have classed the "vanities" for which this receipt proposes a remedy, for he defines vanity to be "emptyness, fruitless desire, trifling labour, falsehood, empty pleasure, ostentation, and petty pride." When the fairies proposed to the parson of Warlingham a remedy for the "Vanities of the Head," they were certainly intending a cure for some malady of man's mind, among which vanity in all its varieties may well be reckoned. "Vanity of vanities," saith the preacher, "all is vanity!" How well Seneca agrees with Solomon—"Leve est vanumque totum hoc quod felicitas dicitur!" Few coxcombs, dandies, and heads filled with fine poetic conceits, would like to be anointed with this bitter cure for self-sufficiency. The wax might make the plaster stick, but it may be feared that the honey and the incense would neutralize all the good effects to be expected from the wormwood and salt.

"The sixthe booke" begins on folio 91, and is called "an excellent booke of playsters, salves, diet drinks, purgations, potions, etc." The "seaventh book" purports to be "taken out of a booke intituled A Thousand notable thinges of Sundrye sorts," and has four pages written in the same neat hand as the preceding parts of the volume; but the rest of it, extending from folio 107 to folio 144, is in different hands. It cannot be asserted that this concluding part of the manuscript is in any degree exceeded in wonderful and miracle-working nostrums and compositions by the fairy-imparted cures derived from the study of the Vicar of Warlingham; but a very slight inspection is sufficient to satisfy us that our ancestors did not live in enviable times, nor were under the influence of enviable prejudices or opinions. The most disgusting filthiness, the most debasing credulity, abound both in the cookery and medical departments of the volume. The extracts we have made from the revelations of the court and council of Queen Mab, are polite and rational in comparison with the strange and unspeakable things that are related even in that and other parts of the book. True it is, that here and there we find good useful compounds, and prescriptions founded upon experience and pure induction from Hippocrates and Galen, as well as extracts from Pliny and Tricenna; but the collection in general teems with ignorance, superstition, astrology, and magic; and one quotation from the

seventh book, in addition to those we have already given, will, we think, be sufficient to convince the reader, whose curiosity has never led him back to review the medical science of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, upon how much better time "his lot has fallen," than men enjoyed even in the boasted "golden days of good Queen Bess."

6. To get a pretious stone out of a snake.—If a water snake be tyed by the tayle with a corde, and hanged up, and a vessell full of water set below the snake, after a certayne time he will avoyde out of his mouth a stone, which stone being taken out of the vessell, he drinckes up all water: let this stone be tyed to the bellye of them that have the dropsye, and the water will be exhausted or drunk up, and it fullye and wholelye helpes the partye that hath the sayd dropsye.—Jacobus Hollerius.

V. H.

Remedies for the Head-Ache.

[1776, p. 355.]

The following receipt is literally transcribed from "The most excellent and perfecte homishe Apothecarye, or homely Physick Book, translated out of the Almaine Speche into English, by John Hollybush. Collen, 1561." [See note 32.] The credulity and superstition of the early practitioners of physic are so singular as scarcely to merit belief in the present more enlightened age. Yet even in this generation a garland of vervain worn for weeks or months is said to have cured the most obstinate and dangerous complaints: a proof that the reign of ignorance and folly has not yet ceased.

H. D.

A WOUNDERFUL EXPERIENCE FOR THE HEAD-ACHE.

Set a dish or platter of tynne upon the bare head filled with water, put an unce and a halfe or two unces of melten lead therein, whyle he hath it upon the head. Or els make a garland of vervayne and wear it daye and night, that helpeth wondrously.

Hair of the Same Dog.

[1789, Part II., p. 614.]

When a person, after drinking too much, finds himself disordered next morning, the advice is, to take a hair of *the same dog*, or of the *old dog*. Quære, upon what ground this notion is taken up? Is it from an opinion, that poisonous animals carry their own antidote, as the *exungia viperina* is good against the bite of a viper, and a bit of the liver of a mad dog was formerly thought to be a remedy for canine madness? The drawing of blood from a witch was imagined to prevent the effects of her witchcraft, and seems to proceed upon the same

principle. However, I leave it to your numerous correspondents to inform, whence the common advice above-mentioned could possibly originate, and upon what footing it stands.

Yours, etc., L. E.

The King's Evil Cured by a Royal Touch.

[1747, p. 13.]

(From the *General Evening Post*, Jan. 7.)

Having just seen Mr. Carte's "History of England," I found the following remarkable story, which he has laboriously introduced by way of note to illustrate his history a thousand years preceding. Speaking of the unction of kings, and the gift of healing the scrophulous humour call'd the king's evil, exercised by some European princes, anointed at their coronations, and succeeding lineally to their crowns by proximity of blood, he says: But whatever is to be said in favour of its being appropriated to the eldest descendant of the first branch of the royal line of the kings of France, England, etc., I have *myself* seen a very remarkable instance of such a cure, which could not possibly be ascribed to the regal unction.

One Christopher Lovel, born at Wells in Somersetshire, but when he grew up residing in the city of Bristol, where he got his living by labour, was extremely afflicted for many years with that distemper, and such a flow of the scrophulous humour, that tho' it found a vent by five running sores about his breast, neck, and arms, there was such a tumour on one side of his neck, as left no hollow between his cheek and the upper part of his left shoulder, and forced him to keep his head always awry. The young man was reduced, by the virulence of the humour, to the lowest state of weakness; appeared a miserable object in the eyes of all the inhabitants of that populous city; and having for many years tried all the remedies which the art of physick could administer, without receiving any benefit, resolved at last to go abroad to be touched. He had an uncle in the place, who was an old seaman, and carried him from Bristol, at the end of August, A.D. 1716, along with him to Cork in Ireland, where he put him on board a ship that was bound to St. Martin's in the isle of Ree. From thence Christopher made his way first to Paris, and thence to the place where he was touched, in the beginning of November following, by the eldest lineal descendant of a race of kings, who had indeed, for a long succession of ages, cured that distemper by the *royal touch*. But this descendant and next heir of their blood had not, at least at that time, been crowned or *anointed*. The usual effect, however, followed: from the moment that the man was touched and invested with the narrow ruband, to which a small piece of silver was pendant, according to the rites prescribed in the office appointed by the church for that solemnity, the humour dispersed insensib'y, his sores healed

up, and he recovered strength daily, till he arrived in perfect health, in the beginning of January following, at Bristol, having spent only four months and some few days in his voyage. There it was, and in the week preceding St. Paul's fair, that I saw the man, in his recovered vigour of body, without any remains of his complaint, but what were to be seen in the red scars then left upon the five places, where the sharp humour had found a vent, but which were otherwise entirely healed, and as sound as any other part of his body. Dr. Lane, an eminent physician in the place, whom I visited on my arrival, told me of this cure, as the most wonderful thing that ever happened; and pressed me as well to see the man upon whom it was performed, as to talk about his case with Mr. Samuel Pye, a very skilful surgeon, and I believe still living in that city; who had tried in vain, for three years together, to cure the man by physical remedies. I had an opportunity of doing both; and Mr. Pye, after dining together, carrying me to the man, I examined and informed myself fully of all particulars, relating as well to his illness as his cure; and found upon the whole, that if it is not to be deemed miraculous, it at least deserved the character, given of it by Dr. Lane, of being one of the most wonderful events that has ever happened. There are abundance of instances of the cure of the king's evil, by the touch of our English princes in former times, mentioned by Tucker in his book on that subject: and it is observable that the author was himself an infidel on that head, till convinced of his mistake by the late learned Mr. Anstis, garter-king-of-arms, who furnished him with those proofs out of the English records, which attest the facts, and are printed in that treatise. But I am apt to think there never was an instance in which the distemper had prevailed to an higher degree, or the surprizing cure of it was known to such infinite multitudes of people, as in the case of Christopher Lovel. (*Vide* book iv., p. 291.)

Bristol, Jan. 13, 1747.

In your paper of the 7th I find a quotation from Mr. Carte's "History of England," of one Christopher Lovel of this city, whom the author affirms he saw after he had been cured of an inveterate king's evil by the touch of a certain pretended r——l hand, when the skill of the most able physician and surgeon had proved ineffectual; and was surprized to see such an idle Ja——te tale, calculated to support the old thread-bare notion of the divine hereditary right of a certain house, which notion, I thought, had been long exploded by men of sense, and existed no where but in the brains of popish enthusiasts and credulous bigots.

The illustrious royal family now on the throne despise such childish delusions.

I have made a faithful enquiry into the story of this Lovel, and shall endeavour to prove the fallacy of it.

'Tis acknowledged that the rumour of this remarkable cure made

a great noise in this city amongst the ignorant and disaffected. Great numbers visited the patient to be convinced of the truth of this miracle, and greedily swallowed the delusion; as the doctrine of divine hereditary right had been industriously propagated for some years before. That high scorbutick ulcers will accidentally cicatrize and dry up, and afterwards break out in other parts of the body from unknown causes, every physician and surgeon well knows. But I will account for this cure in a natural way. Physicians and surgeons all agree, that change of air and diet, with a long course of exercise,* are the most probable means of removing or curing all chronick disorders. All these Lovel must necessarily have had from St. Martin's in France to Avignon, and back again to England: every day, nay, every hour he travelled, he must imbibe new columns of air. His food, which before was beef, pork, and such sort of coarse scorbutick diet, was thin light soups and vegetables. His drink at home was generally large draughts of ale and spirituous liquors; whereas abroad it was water, or perhaps sometimes a little wine. This alteration of diet, with daily exercise, must doubtless have salutary influence upon his disease.

When he had been touch'd by the Pretender at Avignon, he was immediately put under the care of physicians and surgeons, who used their art upon him, imagining the latter more efficacious than the former. After near five months' absence he came back to Bristol, and declared himself healed by the touch. But, alas: his cure lasted but a short time; his sores broke out in many other parts of his body with violence: so he returned into France again in hopes of the same success, but the poor wretch never reach'd Avignon, but died miserably on the road.

This, upon my reputation, is the best history I can gain of Mr. Carte's tremendous miracle, which can be well attested, if required.

It is granted that this Lovel was in appearance cured of the king's evil; but then his cure was only temporary. In the neighbourhood where he lived, and worked as a labourer (to turn the wheel for the pewterers), he had a very ill character in his morals, but of great pretended orthodoxy, and the divine hereditary right of an abjured family.

Can any man with a grain of reason believe, that such an idle, superstitious charm, as the touch of a man's hand, can convey a virtue sufficiently efficacious to heal so stubborn a chronick disorder, as an ulcerated inveterate evil?

AMICUS VERITATIS.

* A French author writes, that a man committed to the galleys was cured of the venereal disease by the hard labour in the heat of summer.

[1751, pp. 414, 415.]

SOME REMARKS ON A PRETENDED CURE PERFORMED UPON ONE
DAVID WEST, OF BIRMINGHAM, BY AN ANGEL, IN A LETTER
FROM BRISTOL.

The story is thus related: "One David West, of Birmingham, had been reduced to near the brink of the grave by a violent ulcerated king's-evil, had tried all imaginable means of physic and surgery without success, and expecting no human relief, gave himself up as a dying man. But early in the morning, May 29, 1749, accidentally and happily meeting with an handsome, genteel young gentleman, who enquired, what made him so dejected and melancholy? West told him, it was his ill state of health, from which he expected a speedy death, as all the means he had used had proved ineffectual. The gentleman stranger, pitying his miserable condition, assured him he had a remedy at hand, which he would apply; and he doubted not of being successful, if West believed sincerely in the power, grace, and mercies of his Maker; to which David answered in the affirmative. Then he took hold of poor David's hands, and join'd them in a supplicating posture, and immediately very devoutly utter'd a Latin prayer; then laying his hand upon his sores, and all the diseased parts, he pronounced these words, 'I touch, but God healeth.' Whereupon, in about six hours after touching, the wounds ceased to run; that by the next morning they were crusted over; and in a day or two more those incrustations, and all the scurf, gradually fell off, and in a short time afterwards, he became quite clean and sound, and so continues to be."

Every circumstance of this story discovers that it is a mere J—te tale, calculated to raise in the minds of people the belief that the p—d—r and his family are favoured by heaven with supernatural means, to recover unhappy patients from an otherwise incurable malady. The representation of the person of the young p—d—r is agreeable to what West paints his fine stranger to be, as the malcontents assert. Again, May 29 is the anniversary of the restoration of the S— family to the crown. Then the words formerly used by our superstitious kings, upon their touching, viz., "I touch, and God healeth," indubitably prove the base intention of this letter.

I have enquired, says the letter-writer, into this tremendous affair, and am inform'd by a sensible gentleman of the town of Birmingham, that this same David West was very ill of the king's-evil, and is now recovered, but by what means he never heard;* that he actually declared that it was as above recited, but every honest sensible man of the town despised his story, as a visionary tale. The solemn words, 'I touch, but God healeth,' were those our former kings always pro-

* It has been since discover'd that his good Angel was a Jew, who cured him by external application.

nounced when they touched for the evil ; but this was never done but in the presence of a bishop or priest, who introduced the patient to the royal presence for that salutary intention. Then also a form of prayer for the divine blessing was used, and the king hung a small piece of silver about the person's neck, which he was required to wear during his life ; without which forms no person was ever before cured, as appears from our miracle-mongers. Now, in this case, neither of these important ceremonies were observed ; no king, or pretended one, wrought this miracle, but the son only.

No author, not even Mr. Carte, who speaks of such pious frauds, allows the son a commission in the life-time of the father for exercising this miraculous power ; but now forsooth, to render the miracle the more convincing, the r——l pr——ce is to be possess of this sanative commission to shew his right the stronger to the unbelieving people of this nation.

The author of this J——te miracle (first published in the *Ch——r Courant*) introduces his story of David West, by declaring the surprising cures reported to be performed by Glastonbury Waters, which he would fain make the credulous vulgar believe, are chiefly owing to the bodies of divers Saints, Martyrs, and other Popish devotees, antiently there deposited.

I have inquired into several of the mighty cures, which the publick has been from time to time imposed on, from these Glastonbury Waters, and cannot find that they have done anything more than common spring water would have done.

Two eminent physicians publicly declared, that upon tracing them to the originals reported to be cured by them, they have not found a single instance to be depended upon to be really so in fact, Chancellor (the dreamer of their virtues) is asserted to continue in as bad, or worse state of health, than he was before he used them. Infinite numbers, flocking superstitiously to the spring, have drank and used them by bathing and washing ulcers, swellings, and for all manner of disorders, for seven successive Sundays (required by Chancellor's dream) without the least benefit.

To return to the story of West.—As there was not a third person present (though in the publick streets of that mighty populous town of Birmingham) when David was touch'd and cured of his evil, by this fine beautiful youth, the credit of this miracle solely depends upon his bare assertion for authority. I am informed he is now living and in health, and still persists in his story.

About three or four years ago, I remember how the publick papers rung of the miraculous cures performed by Bridget Bostock [see next section on "Witchcraft"], who, by stroking her patients with her own fasting spittle, and at the same time uttering a short prayer, instantaneously cured thousands labouring under all manner of bodily diseases ! As the ignorant vulgar are ever fond of miracles, this im-

posture had its votaries too, like Glaston Waters, and the Royal Touch ; but time and experience convinced them of their folly.

[1774, p. 457.]

Your correspondent D. H., at p. 247 [see *ante*, p. 39], might have spared his assertion, that the "miraculous gift (of curing the King's Evil) was left to be claimed by the Stuarts," and that "our ancient Plantagenets were humbly content to cure the cramp," had he been acquainted with Dr. John Friend's "History of Physick." This learned physician will inform him, at pp. 267, 274, 5, 6, of vol. ii. 8vo., that Gilbert, called Anglicus, whom Bale places in 1210, though Leland says he was more modern, "in treating of a strumous swelling in the glands, tells us, that this disorder is otherwise called the King's-Evil, because Kings cure it. This account, however concise, from a physician, who seems not to have been led by any bias of interest, is sufficient to convince us, that the custom of touching was very early introduced by our Kings ; and, from this author's manner of expressing himself, it is very plain, that he looked upon it as a very ancient practice. There is reason to think, by what is here and there hinted in our English history, that this usage had, for some centuries at least, prevailed here ; and they who carry it up as far as the time of Edward the Confessor seem to have good grounds for their opinion ; at least, I do not see any proofs which can be brought against it. If the Monkish writers are supposed to be all partial, and inclined to flatter the crown, there are others whose veracity cannot be called in question. Sir John Fortescue, a very learned and wise man, in his defence of the title of Lancaster, just after Henry the Fourth's accession to the crown, represents the gift of healing as a privilege, which had, for time immemorial, belonged to the Kings of England : and he is so particular as to attribute this to the unction of their hands, which is used at the coronation : and therefore says, that Queens can have no such gift, because in this case that part of the ceremony is left out. However, we know Queen Elizabeth thought herself so much a King, that, among other regal functions, she frequently exercised this. Archbishop Bradwardine, who died in 1348, and who appeals to the world for the cures performed by the royal touch, uses very strong expressions concerning the antiquity of it ; which surely he would never have done, had it been so modern a practice, as some think it." From p. 284, also, of this valuable history, we learn that John of Gaddesden, who flourished in 1320, exhorted persons in scrophulous cases "to apply to the King for the royal touch."

[1811, *Part II.*, p. 125.]

On looking over a friend's library lately in the country, I noticed the following curious and rare Tracts : the account may probably be interesting to some of your Readers. [See note 33.]

"The Ceremonies for the Healing of them that be diseased with the King's Evil, used in the time of King Henry VII. Printed by H. Hills, 1686, London."

"A Miracle of Miracles wrought by the Blood of King Charles the First, of happy Memory, upon a *Mayd* at *Detford*, foure Miles from London, who, by the Violence of the Disease called the King's Evill, was blinded one whole year; but, by making use of a piece of Handkircher, dipped in the King's Blood, is recovered of her Sight, to the Comfort of the King's Friends and Astonishment of his Enemies: the Truth hereof many Thousands can testifie. London, 1649."

"A Letter sent to a noble Lord of this Kingdom from an eminent Divine, of a *Great Miracle* wrought by a piece of a Handkerchief, dipped in his Majesties Blood: the Truth whereof he himself saw, and is ready to depose it, and doth believe will be attested by 500 others, if occasion require. 1659."

"His Grace the Duke of Monmouth honoured in his Progress in the West of England; in an account of a most *Extraordinary* Cure of the King's Evil, in a Letter from Crookhern, in the county of Somerset, from the Minister of the Parish and many others; signed, Henry Clerk, Minister—John Starky, Clerk, and seven others. London, 1680."—Single sheet.

"CHARISMA BASILICON; or, The Royal Gift of Healing Strumaes, or King's Evil; by John Browne, Chirurgeon in ordinary to his Majesty. London, 1684."

"Authorities relating to the same collected, the parties and their relatives, by the Rev. Mr. Robert Watts, LL.D." MS.

It is to be hoped there are not so many afflicted at this time with that terrible affliction.

In the Charisma Basilicon is,

"An Account of Persons touched by His Sacred Majesty, King Charles the Second, for the Cure of the King's Evil, from May, 1660; from a Register kept by Thomas Haynes, Esq., Serjeant of His Majesty's Chappel Royal:

1660 . . .	6725	1663 . . .	4667
1661 . . .	4619	1664 . . .	3335
1662 . . .	4271		

"Register kept by Mr. Thomas Donkley, Keeper of His Majesty's Closet, from May, 1667, to May, 1682:

1667 . . .	3073
1681 . . .	6007
1682 . . .	8477

The whole is above Ninety-two Thousand!

S. Y.

[1829, Part II., pp. 499-501.]

The following account of the ceremony of touching for the King's Evil, written evidently by an eye-witness, is translated from a book, entitled, "*Relation, en forme de Journal, du Voyage et Sejour que le serenissime et tres puissant Prince Charles II. Roy de la Grande Bretagne a fait en Hollande, depuis le 25 May, jusq' au 2 Juin, 1660. A la Haye, chez Adrian Vlacy, 1660.*" The portion of our history to which it belongs, the actors concerned in it, the minute particularity of its description, and the royal etiquette so ostentatiously observed by an exiled monarch in a republican state, may render it interesting to your readers. It may be compared with a communication which appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, dated June, 1774, on the *Ancient Ordre for hallowinge of the Crampe Rings* [see ante, p. 33], where it is asserted, on the authority of Dr. Percy, that the gift of curing the King's Evil was claimed by none of our sovereigns prior to the Stuarts. The religious part of the ceremony, which took place on Sunday, May 30, 1660, may also be compared with the office *At the Healing*, in some of the early editions of the Book of Common Prayer. The assertion noticed at the end of this narrative, that to lose the coin appended to the neck of the patient, was to lose the benefit of the rite, seems to me a mere pretence, invented to account for some of the many cases of failure to which this method of cure must have been liable, if ever, from the force of an excited imagination, it could have been at all efficacious in removing such a disease as the scrophula.

ENEFELDENSIS.

After the sermon, several persons labouring under the King's Evil presented themselves, whom His Majesty was to touch, after several others, whom he had touched in private, on Friday and Saturday, the 28th and the 29th of this month. And as this ceremony is performed with circumstances very remarkable, and very different from those which accompany it in France, when the King there touches such patients, it will not be improper to relate here all the particularities; constituting, as they do, an essential part of our narrative, which professes to omit nothing done by His Majesty at the Hague. But before we enter upon this recital, it will be necessary to disabuse the minds of those who believe that whatever the Kings of England do in this matter, is but a copy of what is done in France; and that it is only because of the pretension which they have to that crown, and in virtue of the title which they assume, and the arms of France which they bear on their escutcheon, that they attribute to themselves a gift which belongs to the eldest son of the Church alone. For it is most certain that the King of Great Britain possesses this right and this advantage, not at all as King of France, although he takes that

quality in his titles, but as King of England ; and because the Kings, his predecessors, have efficaciously exercised it from the reign of Edward the Confessor, that is, from the beginning of the 11th century, long before the Kings of England had declared that pretension, which they did, when Philip de Valois came to the crown. This ceremony is now performed in the manner which we are about to describe.

Those who are afflicted with the glandular disease called "the King's Evil," because the King cures it, are obliged to apply to his Majesty's first Surgeon, who examines them ; and if he judges that theirs is the disease which the King cures, he appoints them a day and an hour to be in attendance at the Chapel, where the King is to touch them. As in France, the ceremony of touching the sick takes place in the morning, after the King has received the Sacrament ; so on this day it was performed at the Chapel of the Princess Royal, after the King had been present during a sermon and public prayer. The preaching being concluded, a large chair was placed for the King, at a little distance from the congregation. As soon as his Majesty was seated, one of his private Secretaries took his station on the right side of the chair, holding on his arm, or else in his right hand, as many "Angels," each suspended from a riband of white silk, as there were patients who had presented themselves to be touched. But as Angels, a gold coin so named from its being marked with the figure of an Angel, of the value of about two crowns and a half, are so rare, especially in these provinces, that there is a difficulty in procuring them, the King commonly uses, as he did on this occasion, half-Caroluses, which are of the same value. The Chaplain, who has preached before the King, and who usually takes a text appropriate to the ceremony, goes through the succeeding office, and stands on the left of the chair, whilst the surgeon, with the patients, places himself in front, but at some distance from the King. Upon the occasion, however, of which we now speak, the text had nothing in common with the ceremony ; nor was it the clergyman who had preached that assisted at it, but Dr. Brown, Chaplain of the Princess Royal, who officiated throughout it, representing the King's Chaplain, as he had done on all similar occasions, at Breda, during the stay which his Majesty had made there.

After the King had taken his place, having the Secretary by his side, and the Surgeon in front of him, the Chaplain, who held in his hand the New Testament, chose the text of St. Mark's Gospel, chap. xvi. from the 14th verse to the end : and, in the meantime, the Surgeon, taking one of the patients by the hand, after each of them had made three low bows, came with him to kneel down before the King, close to the chair. And, whilst the Chaplain pronounced these words of that Gospel, "They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover," the King put his hands on the two cheeks of the sick person. This being done, he who had been touched, retired, and they brought

another sick person to the King, who touched him in the same manner; the Chaplain repeating the same words as often as there were patients whom the King touched, and who were brought, one after another, to the feet of his Majesty. The Surgeon, who remained on his knees whilst the King was touching, did not rise until the King had finished touching the last; and he then again made three low bows, and retired with the patients to the place where they were at first, and remained there until the Chaplain had finished reading the rest of the Gospel, the reading of which he did not go on with until after the King had touched the last of the sick. This being done, the Chaplain began another Gospel, taken from the 1st chapter of St. John's Gospel, from the 1st to the 15th verse: and whilst he read it, the Surgeon brought back the persons touched by the King, in the same manner as before; and his Majesty, whilst the Chaplain was pronouncing these words of the Gospel, "That was the true light, which lighteth every man, that cometh into the world," taking from the hand of his private Secretary one of the Angels, suspended from a riband, hung it upon the neck of one of the sick, who approached in succession, as they had done, when the Surgeon presented them to be touched; the Chaplain, also, repeating these words as often as there had been persons touched. After that, they all retired to their former station, and then the Chaplain finished reading the Gospel, as far as the verse already pointed out. Some other passages of the Holy Scriptures were then read, and the whole service was concluded by the Lord's Prayer, and by a prayer to God, that He would be pleased to bless the ceremony which the King had been performing.

The service being finished, the Gentleman Usher (Mr. Sandys at that time officiated) brought a basin, an ewer, and a napkin, and being accompanied by two noblemen, namely, the Lord Lionel Cranfield, Earl of Middlesex, and the Lord Henry Jermyn, whom the King has since created Earl of St. Alban's, presented the basin and ewer to the younger of the two, who placed himself on the left; the gentleman, who carried the napkin, taking the right of the older of the two lords. The latter being thus between them, they advanced in this order towards the King, and after making three low bows, they all three knelt before his Majesty; and whilst the Earl of St. Alban's poured water on the King's hands, the Earl of Middlesex took the napkin from the Gentlemen Usher and presented it to his Majesty, who wiped his hands with it. After that, the two lords and the Gentleman Usher rose, made again three low bows to the King, and retired: the King then rose, also, and withdrew to the apartment of the Princess Royal.

It is well known that the King has very often touched sick persons both at Breda, where he touched 260 from Saturday the 17th of April, to Sunday the 23rd of May, and at Bruges and Brussels, during his stay there; and the English confidently assert, not only that it

was not without success, because it is the relief experienced which daily draws a great number of these patients, even from the most remote provinces of Germany, but also that not one of them is thus so perfectly cured as not to be attacked again by the same disease, if he be so unfortunate as to lose, by accident or otherwise, the coin which the King hangs about his neck, when he is touched : and without hope of recovering from it if he does not procure himself to be touched again, and to have another Angel hung about his neck. We should have had some reluctance in mentioning this particular, if several grave persons, whom one could not suspect of superstition or bigotry, had not spoken of it as of a fact of constant occurrence, and of which no doubt ought to be entertained. [See *ante*, p. 136.]

A Ring Superstition.

[1794, *Part I.*, p. 433.]

Popular superstitions are always worth recording ; they illustrate tradition, and exemplify manners. I do not remember to have ever seen mention of a notion which prevails in Berkshire, and, for aught I know, in other parts of England—that a ring, made from a piece of silver collected at the communion, is a cure for convulsions and fits of every kind. A woman in my parish, which is in Berkshire, applied to me for a shilling on Easter Sunday, in the hope of deriving benefit from the effect of a ring to be made from it by a blacksmith in or near the town. As I was convinced she was not influenced by any mercenary motive, but had really confidence in the remedy, I took care not to deprive her of such benefit, at least, as she might derive from her imagination. I have not yet heard of the success of the donation ; but have since understood that the superstition prevails very generally in the neighbourhood ; and shall be obliged to any of your correspondents who can inform me of its operation in any other parts of England. The notion should seem to originate from Popish ideas of the Eucharist.

B. b.

[1794, *Part II.*, pp. 597, 598.]

In answer to B. b. p. 433, I can inform him that, about two years ago, I was applied to for silver to make a ring for a young girl of the place where I live (Gloucestershire), but not in the same way your correspondent was. The girl's mother came to me ; and, after a prelude of "Sir, I hope you will excuse my boldness !" "I do not wish to offend you !" "I beg your pardon for troubling you !" etc., etc., with a great many more introductory phrases, which almost put me out of countenance, not being able to guess what dreadful tale she would unfold—at length she said that her daughter, a young girl in her teens, was very much troubled with convulsion fits. "Well !" cried I, a little recovered from the surprise she had occasioned, "do

you mistake me for a doctor?" "No, sir, but I came to beg that you will collect five sixpences of five different batchelors, which you will be so good as to convey by the hands of a batchelor to a smith who is a batchelor, for him to make a ring for my daughter, to cure her fits." Thus the mighty business was out. It was to be kept a profound secret; not the persons who gave the money were to know what for or whom they gave it to. I did as desired; and, behold! it cured the girl. This I can affirm. Now, Mr. Urban, I think with your correspondent B. b., that it must be the power of imagination entirely that did this. I have since known more instances with the same effect, though differing as to the number of sixpences, some taking three, seven, or nine, to make the ring.

Yours, etc., BOURTONIENSIS.

[1794, *Part II.*, p. 648.]

R. C. observes that the superstition respecting sacrament rings, p. 433, is not confined to Berkshire; he has heard of it in a county 100 miles north of Berks. That it occurs in Gloucestershire, see, in the present month, p. 597. Norfolciensis also has sent us some instances of it in Norfolk; and A Rustic Swain of others in Sussex.

[1794, *Part II.*, pp. 889, 890.]

In your excellent Repository for May, p. 433, is a letter from a Berkshire correspondent respecting a superstitious custom which obtains in his neighbourhood, of applying a piece of silver collected at the Communion to the cure of convulsions, when worn as a ring. In answer to his queries, I beg leave to inform him that we have in Devonshire a custom very similar, and made use of for the same purpose. The materials are, however, different; with us the ring must be made of three nails or screws which have been used to fasten a coffin, and must be dug out of the churchyard. The force of imagination in a case which I recollect produced a temporary cure; and the patient, having unfortunately lost her ring, was so shocked at her misfortune, as she thought it, that her spasms returned, and were cured again by procuring another ring made of the same materials. I should be most ready to ascribe the origin of these superstitious customs, the rings, the touch of a dead man's hand, etc., to the same source.

A CONSTANT READER.

Charms, Omens, and Cautionary Denouncements.

[1855, *Part II.*, pp. 503, 504.]

I recognize every one of your correspondent, Mr. Noake, charms, omens, and cautionary denouncements, but do not admit their exclusive application to Worcester. [See *ante*, p. 133.] I have had the benefit

of their inculcation in every county in England, and I have rigidly and reverently obeyed, as my fingers and toes will testify, the solemn injunction impressively delivered to me seventy years ago by my grandmother, conveyed in the following couplet—

“Better thou wert never born,
Than on a Friday pare thy horn,”

which has reason as well as rhyme in its support ; whereas, the lines quoted by Mr. Noake are destitute of both :

“Better a child was never born
Than cut his hoof of a Sunday.”

I remember when most of the houses in Monmouth Street, Soho, had a horseshoe nailed under the threshold of the entrance, to prevent the admission of witches, and some still remain, and, as according to the then fashion of hanging at Tyburn and elsewhere, the culprit walked under the ladder, I was considerably warned ever to walk round it.

A pillow filled with hops was prescribed to George III. by a physician at Reading, recommended by Lord Sidmouth, and administered accordingly.

That the present of a knife or pair of scissors cuts love is a certain fact.

Yours, M. M. M.

Wonderful Effect Of a Charm.

[1823, *Part I.*, p. 214.]

The days of miracle and chivalry, we are told, have gone by,—witches, fairies, ghosts, and goblins, are laid full many a fathom deep in the Red Sea. But charms and amulets, those sacred arcana of superstition, at the disposal of cunning men, are still in full possession of their accustomed powers, and wield an influence over the mind not to be controuled by reason and experience.

The following is a true recital of a fact positively within my own knowledge.

My brother has a considerable farm in Worcestershire. His tenant is a yeoman of some substance, intelligent, rational, and in common reputation a man of sound sense and good understanding. About two years since, the landlord and the farmer met ; questions of kindness and courtesy passed ; and the latter expressed himself happy in his children, and prosperous, though things were not as they had used to be. His boys were grown into manhood, and shared in his daily toil. His girls were good housewives, contented and healthy ; all, save one, and she had sickened long under a sad disease, which, wasting her strength, had brought her nearly to the grave. The anxious father had consulted every medical practitioner of note the country round, and had sought at Gloucester that certainty of relief,

which the high talents of its medical professors so naturally promised. A large glandular swelling on one side of her neck, drained from her the whole strength of life; and still no relief was found; it was pronounced incurable. At this time a cunning man of high reputation presented himself, and proposed the experiment of a *charm*, which, under similar circumstances, had been universally successful. He examined the part minutely, and left the patient, requiring neither the exhibition of medicine, nor attention to diet. Nature was to be his only handmaid. Now comes the extraordinary fact. He caught a frog, no matter where; and with his knife inflicted a wound on that part of its neck, corresponding exactly with the seat of disease in the patient's, and then suffered the animal to escape. "If (said he) it lives, the disease will gradually waste away, and your daughter recover; but if the creature dies in consequence of this injury, there is then no hope; the malady will continue to increase, and a painful, though it may be a lingering death will be the certain consequence."

Some time after this interview, my brother and his tenant met again; and what was the strange result? the charm had prospered, or rather Nature had triumphed; because, perhaps, left to her own powerful resources;—the maid no longer suffered; the disease had dispersed without any medical assistance, and the "cunning man" has established a character and a practice which, until Nature plays him some mischievous trick, will crown his name with honour, and fill his strong box with more substantial testimonies of the credulity of

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

Ancient Charm against Fire.

[1846, *Part II.*, pp. 383, 384.]

Among the figured tiles in Great Malvern Church engraved in your Magazine for 1844, plate 1, figure vii. (and at large in Nichol's "Specimens of Encaustic Tiles," fig. 75, where it is mentioned as having been found also at Shrewsbury) is one which I will request you to introduce again to the notice of your readers.

It bears the following inscription: *Mentem sanctam spontaneum honorem deo et patrie liberationem.*

Mr. Way, when describing the Malvern tile, mentioned that the same inscription was placed upon the great bell erected in Kenilworth Church at the beginning of the fifteenth century; and also that it had been found as a charm "for fyre" in a monkish manual of the same period, now in the British Museum. (MS. Addit. 12,195, fol. 136 b. It is also written twice in fol. 121 b.)

I have recalled the attention of your readers to this subject, in consequence of having accidentally discovered that the same superstition which prevailed in England in the fifteenth century is continued in Germany in the nineteenth. Among a lot of views on the Continent which I recently purchased at a print sale, I have chanced to become

possessed of a slip of paper which was removed "From the door of a Cottage on the Rhine." Its ends on either side are notched into two points, and rudely daubed with red lines, intended to represent flames. The three crosses are also inserted with red paint. The charm is thus inscribed :

Mentem Sanctam ✠ Spontaneam ✠
honorem Deo ✠ et Patrie liberationem
ignis a læsura protege nos Agatha pia.
187.

St. Agatha, virgin and martyr, is related to have suffered at Catana in Sicily, under Quintianus, consul of that island in the time of the Emperor Decius, about the year of our Lord 253. After enduring a long series of torments, which are detailed in her legend, she died in prison, and the following circumstances are stated to have followed her interment.* A youth never seen before appeared, clothed in silk, with more than a hundred others clothed in albs; coming to the body, he placed a marble tablet at its head, and having closed the tomb, he disappeared with all his companions. On the tablet it was thus written : *Mentem sanctam spontaneum : honorem deo : et patrie liberationem.*

On this miracle being made known, not only Christians, but even heathens and Jews, began to venerate the tomb of the virgin. After the lapse of a year, towards the day of her birth, the neighbouring mountain of Etna burst forth into fire, which, as a torrent descending from the mountain and burning everything, was approaching rapidly to the city. Then the multitude of the Pagans seized the veil with which the virgin's tomb was covered, and opposed it against the fire. And immediately, on her birthday, the fire ceased, and proceeded no further.

On this legend, it seems, the supposed influence of St. Agatha against fire was founded. The like virtues are still ascribed to Saint Januarius by the inhabitants of the country round Vesuvius, as is well known from the narratives of many modern travellers. His legend is palpably borrowed from the fiery trial to which the three officers of the province of Babylon were subjected by King Nebuchadnezzar. It relates, that during the persecution of Diocletian, Timotheus was sent to the city of Nola to exterminate the Christians. Having imprisoned Januarius, Bishop of Beneventum, and finding that he could not, either by threats or promises, induce him to sacrifice to the heathen gods, he commanded a furnace to be kept burning for three days, and Januarius to be cast therein. When that was done, the bishop was seen walking in the midst of the fire, praying and singing with angels. On this being reported to Timotheus, by his

* I quote from "Catalogus Sanctorum et Gestorum eorum ex diversis voluminibus collectus : editus a reverendissimo in Christo patre d'no Petro de natalibus de Venetiis dei gratia episcopo Equilino. Lugduni, 1519," fol.

soldiers, he commanded the furnace to be opened, and thereupon the flames breaking forth slew many of the Pagans that were standing by ; but Januarius leapt forth from the fire so entirely uninjured that neither his hair nor his apparel appeared in any wise burnt. Such is the legend of St. Januarius, as told by the same author as the former.

Thus it will be seen that both Vesuvius and Etna were alike provided with their tutelary saint, with powers derived in a corresponding manner from their alleged sufferings.

In what way the *words* of this charm first originated, or what may have been the hidden meaning of the author, is a deeper mystery, and one upon which I can throw no light. In the words "*patriæ liberationem*" some political sentiment appears to lurk. I once thought they were conceived by one of the English patriots of the middle ages, with whom many of the clergy are known to have sympathised. But now that the same charm is shown to have been equally prevalent on the Continent, and is carried back to St. Agatha's tomb in Sicily, it seems rather to associate itself with some of the secret bands of Italy or Germany.

A friend very learned in "folk lore" has favoured me with the following quotation, which proves that the merits of St. Agatha were known and appreciated in England :

"Saint Agatha defends thy house from fire and fearful flames."
(Barnaby Googe, "Popish Kingdome.")
Yours, J. G. N.

A Word Charm.

[1867, *Part II.*, p. 786.]

As from your earliest years you have shown a true appreciation of literary curiosities of all kinds, I send you "a charm" which in some degree explains itself. The copy from which I take this was made by a Lincolnshire clergyman, from one in the possession of an honest farmer's wife at Saltfleetby St. Clements, who was very loth to part with it, even for an hour :

"In the year 1603.—A copy of a letter written by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and left by the Angel Gabriel, found under a stone at the foot of a cross eighteen miles from Indiconia. On the top of the stone was written : 'Blessed be thee that turneth ye.' Then they endeavoured to turn it over, but all in vain ; they prayed to God to know the meaning of it. In the same time came a child about the age of six or seven years, and turned it over, to the great admiration of the people that stood by, where under it they found this letter ; to have it read they carried it to the aforesaid town, where it begins :

"'Whosoever worketh on the Sabbath day shall be accursed. I command you to go to church. Keep that day holy and do no work thereon ; for if you keep the Sabbath day holy, and incline your hearts to keep My laws, your sins shall be forgiven you ; but you must believe that this was written by My hand, and spoken with My mouth.

You also take your children and servants to church with you to hear and observe My word, and teach them My commandments. You must fast five Fridays in the year in memory of five wounds taken and received for all-mankind. You must neither take gold nor silver from any person unjustly, nor mock nor scorn My commandments. You shall love one another with brotherly love, and with a tender heart, that your days may be prolonged. You shall also charge them that are not baptized to come to church and receive the same, and be made a member of My church, and in so doing I will heap My blessings upon you, and give you long life, and the land shall be fruitful and bring forth abundantly; but he that is contrary to those things shall be accursed. I will send famine, lightning, and thunder, and scant of all those things, till I have consumed you. Especially on those that will not believe that this was spoken with My mouth and written with My hand. Also he that hath shall give to the poor; and he that hath and doth not shall be accursed, and be a companion of hell. Remember, I say, to keep the Sabbath day holy, for on it I have taken rest Myself. Also he that hath a copy of this letter and doth not publish it abroad to others, shall be accursed; but he that sheweth it abroad shall be blessed; and though he sin as often as there are stars in the skies, he shall be pardoned if he truly repent; and he that believeth not this writing, My plague shall be upon him, his children and cattle, and all that appertaineth unto him. Whoso hath a copy of this in his house, no evil spirit nor evil shall vex him, no hunger nor ague, nor any evil spirit shall annoy; but all goodness shall be where a copy of this shall be found. Also if any woman be in great trouble in her travel and have but a copy of this above her, she shall be safely delivered of her child. You shall hear no more of Me till the day of judgment. In the name of God, amen.

"This is copied from one that Elizabeth Darnell had copied in October 6, 1793."

This curious document has doubtless been copied many times, and treasured up as it is even now at Saltfleetby. Whoever constructed it appears to have been well acquainted with the phraseology of the English Bible and the Book of Common Prayer, and imbued with religious traditions both Catholic and Puritanical. Still, I cannot think it of so early a date as 1603. [See note 34.]

I am, etc., J. T. FOWLER, M.A., F.S.A.

The College, Hurstpierpoint.

The Holy Maul.

[1850, *Part I.*, pp. 250, 252.]

Such of your readers as are members of the Camden Society may remember that in the volume of Anecdotes and Traditions, among other curious illustrations of our folk-lore, which Aubrey has recorded

in his "Remains of Gentilism and Judaism," there occurs the following remarkable allusion to a very repulsive superstition :

"The Holy Mawle, which they fancy hung behind the church door, which when the father was seventie, the sonne might fetch to knock his father in head, as effete and of no more use."

To the short illustration which I then appended to Aubrey's brief notice, I would now add the following, in the hope that some one will devote himself to the clearing up of this very striking but obscure allusion.

Mr. Wright, in the interesting volume of *Latin Stories* edited by him for the Percy Society, has printed one (No. XXVI., p. 28) in which an old man, after surrendering all his property to the husband of his daughter, and being gradually treated by them worse and worse, until he was driven out of the house, contrived to procure good treatment again for the remainder of his days by pretending that he had in a certain chest a sum of money laid up, part of which was to be applied to the "good of his soul," and the rest to dispose of as he pleased. When, however, he was at the point of death, as it is graphically stated :

"antequam totaliter expiraret ad cistam currentes nihil invenerunt nisi malleum, in quo Anglicè scriptum erat :

"Wyht suyle a betel be he smyten,
That al the world hyt mote wyten,
That gyfht his sone al his thing,
And goht hymself a beggyn."

"De un tiel mael seit il feru,
Ke seit parmi le monde conu,
Ky doune kaunke il a à soen enfant,
E va lymeimes mendiaunt."

In a note on this story, Mr. Wright gives from John of Bromyard's "*Summa Predicantium*" the following somewhat more modern English verse, accompanied with a Latin version :

"Wit this betel the smieth,
And alle the worle thit wite,
That thevt the ungunde alle this thing,
And goht him selve a beggyng.

"Quod est interpretatum—

Cum isto malleo percutiatur,
Et a toto mundo sciatur,
Qui omnia sua ingrato dat,
Et ipse post mendicat ;"

and states that the story and the verses appear to have been popular, and to have some connection with (if they are not the foundation of) the superstition alluded to by Aubrey.

I will now refer to a curious passage in a recently published dissertation by a German scholar, F. Nork, "*On the Mythology of Popular Traditions and Tales.*" After speaking of the *Tau* playing an important part in the Egyptian mysteries of Isis, and the Gnostic system of the

Opheites, figuring in the monuments of the Templars, and so in our own day appearing in the hammer of the Freemasons, he proceeds: "That the figure of the hammer, which the heathen compared with the sign of the cross, was held sacred is clear from Thor consecrating with it the funeral pile of Baldur. ('Then stood Thor up and halloed the pile with Miollnir' are the words of Mr. Dasent's picturesque translation of the prose Edda.) In the south of Germany there still exists a tradition which recognises *the hammer as the symbol of the dedication of churches*, a proof not only how far the cult of Thor had extended, but with what difficulty Christianity was enabled to overcome it." A tradition which was communicated by Baader to Mone's "Anzeiger für Kunde Deutscher Vorzeit" for 1839, runs as follows:

"The three old chapels of Scheffersheim, Oberwittzhausen, and Grunfeldhausen were built by giants, who carried the great stones for that purpose in their aprons. When the first chapel was finished the master-builder threw up this hammer into the air with the intent of building another church on the spot where it should fall. At a distance of two miles the hammer fell to the ground, and there was the second church built. On its completion the giant as before threw his hammer into the air, and at the spot where it fell, two miles from the former place, built the third church."

That Thor, the conqueror of the giants, should in this legend figure as a giant, is owing to the indifference of Christianity, which borrowed the notion of the giants as master-builders from heathenism: but here Thor himself does not build the church, which if he had done, he would thereby have made public his veneration for that religion the head of which had appropriated his thunderbolt. (See Grimm's "Mythologie," p. 167, on the resemblance between Thor's hammer and the sign of the cross, etc.) Nork then proceeds to quote from Haupt's "Zeitschrift für Deutsch Alterthum," v. 72, the passage from Anecdotes and Traditions, with the following remarks upon it by Jacob Grimm:

"Were hammers, mallets, or beetles actually suspended, or their figures represented, at the entrance of heathen temples, so may the figures of them, as on other occasions, have found a place on the outside of the walls of Christian churches, or have been built into the city gate. Originally they may have been representations of the sacred hammer of Donar (Thunder), which were afterwards explained by the popular legend that barbarous sons might avail themselves of the certainly not exercised law of putting their 'effete' parents to a more speedy death by means of a hammer. In several of the cities of Silesia and Saxony there hangs at the city gate a mallet, with this inscription:

"Wer den kindern gibt das brod
Und selber dabei leidet Noth,
Den schlägt mit dieser keule todt."

Which may be Englished thus :

"Who to his children gives his bread,
And thereby himself suffers need,
With this mallet strike him dead."

In Osnabruck, according to Strodtmann, there is this rhyme in the front of a house, but it is not stated whether the mallet is there suspended, carved, or merely painted :

"De sinen kindern gift dat braut,
Un lut sulvest naut,
Den sall me slaun mit der kusen daut."

"Here also again a reference to the hammer or mallet giving a death-blow to the greybeard, only so applied as to be a deserved punishment for folly in making over his property for the benefit of his children. There are thus three stages of the myth, and at present also of the symbol: 1. The hammer of the god; 2. The reference to the aged father; 3. The compassionate interpretation of this reference. The English construction must necessarily, as the earlier, precede the German."

It is very probable that if you will permit me thus to draw attention through the pages of the *Gentleman's Magazine* to this curious, if not inviting subject, it may be the means of evoking from some of your numerous readers some fresh illustrations, if not an entire development of what is now so hidden in obscurity—how far the original myth was naturalized in this country, and what have been its gradual modifications here.

WILLIAM J. THOMS.

Remarks on the Ash-Tree.

[1785, *Part II.*, pp. 599, 600.]

The sacred ash Ydrasil is displayed in a wildly sublime allegory;* and many words signifying strength, valour, or pre-eminence, are compounds of the Saxon word *Ærc*, and in the fifth fable man is described as being formed from the ash. Hesiod in like manner deduces his brazen race of men *Ex Μελιαν*, from the ash ('Works and Days,' v. 145) and has in his 'Theogony,' Nymphs of the name of *Μελιαι*. On the other hand, the Roman poets seem to conform to the system of the Druids, when they represent mankind as produced from oaks.

"Gensque virūm truncis et duro robore nata."—VIR. *Æn.* 8, v. 315.

"Homines qui rupto robore nati."—JUV. *Sat.* vi. 12.

It is probably owing to the remains of the Gothic veneration for this tree, that the country people, in the south-east part of the kingdom, split young ashes, and pass their distempered children through the chasm in hopes of a cure. They have also another

* See Mallet's "Introduction à l'Histoire de Dannemarc;" or the English translation, called "Northern Antiquities."

superstitious custom of boring a hole in an ash and fastening in a shrew-mouse (*Sorex Araneus*: Linn.), a few strokes with a branch of this tree is then accounted a sovereign remedy against cramps and lameness in cattle, which are ignorantly supposed to proceed from this really harmless animal. We have seen trees that have undergone the latter operation, and others which have been much injured by the former.

[1787, *Part I.*, p. 313.]

Under the *Ash*, I remarked some superstitious customs, which I observed had been practised on that tree within my memory and notice. By the canons of King Edgar, we find that the elm also was liable to abuses of the same kind, and that many pagan ceremonies prevailed in the tenth century. As the passage is curious, give me leave to insert a literal translation: "We decree that every priest shall anxiously advance Christianity, entirely abolish all heathenism, and forbid tree-worship, divination with the dead omen, charms with song, man-worship, and many other illusions, which are practised in asylums or sanctuaries, on *Elms*, and on various other trees, on stones, and in many other deceits, by which several are perverted who ought not."—*Leg. Sax.* [See note 35.]

Had not Edgar been closely attached to the Pope, I should have imagined that some of these rites, which he prohibits, had been lately introduced from Italy, because the primitive Saxon Church in this island was not blemished with many of the errors by which avarice and ambition afterwards disgraced the Church of Rome. In the mythology of our Teutonic ancestors, this tree had the honour of being chosen for the formation of the first woman, who was called *Embla* (elm), as the first man was *Aske* (ash)—(*Edda*, tab. 5); and unless it was also appropriated to the Roman mysteries, we can hardly forgive Virgil for misplacing the social and cheerful elm in so gloomy and forlorn a situation as the entrance to the infernal shades. (*Æn.* 6, v. 282.)

T. H. W.

[1804, *Part I.*, p. 512.]

On Shorley Heath in Silhill parish, Warwickshire, on the left-hand side of the road going from Shorley-street to Hockley-house (on the high road from Birmingham to Hockley-house) and about a quarter of a mile from Shorley-street, there stands a young ash-tree, close to the cottage of Henry Rowe, whose infant son Thomas Rowe was drawn through the trunk or body of it, in the year 1791, to cure him of a rupture, the tree being then split open for the purpose of passing the child through it. The boy is now 13 years and 6 months old. I have this day, June 10, 1804, seen the ash-tree and Thomas Rowe, as well as his father Henry Rowe, from whom I have received the above account; and he superstitiously believes that his son Thomas

was cured of the rupture, by being drawn through the cleft in the said ash-tree, and by nothing else.

R. G.

[1804, *Part II.*, p. 909.]

The ash-tree described by your correspondent, p. 512, grows by the side of Shirley-street (the road leading to Birmingham from Hockly-house), at the edge of Shirley-heath, in Solihull parish. The upper part of the gap formed by the chizze! has closed; but the lower remains open, as represented, Plate I., Fig. 1; and the tree is healthy and flourishing. Thomas Chillingworth, son of the owner of an adjoining farm, now about 34, was, when an infant of a year old, passed through a similar tree, now perfectly sound, which he preserves with so much care that he will not suffer a single branch to be touched, for it is believed the life of the patient depends on the life of the tree, and the moment that is cut down, be the patient ever so distant, the rupture returns, and a mortification ensues, and terminates in death, as was the case in a man driving a waggon on the very road in question. Rowe's son was passed through the present tree in 1792, at the age of one or two. It is not, however, uncommon for persons to survive for a time the felling of the tree. In one case the rupture returned suddenly, and mortification followed. These trees are left to close of themselves, or are closed with nails. The wood-cutters very frequently meet with the latter. One felled on Bunnan's farm was found full of nails. This belief is so prevalent in this part of the country, that instances of trees that have been employed in the cure are very common. The like notions obtain credit in some part of Essex. Dr. Borlase ("Natural History of Cornwall," p. 179) mentions a noted stone in Maddem parish, "through which it was customary for persons to creep for pains in their backs and limbs; and the fanciful parents, at certain times of the year, did customarily draw their young children through, in order to cure them of the rickets; and that two brass pins were carefully laid across each other, on the top-edge of this stone," for oracular purposes. Whether these customs have any reference to each other, antiquaries must determine, as also concerning the power of ash-trees to repel other maladies or evils, such as shrew-mice, the stopping one of which animals alive into a hole bored in an ash, is imagined an infallible preventative of their ravages in lands.

Yours, etc., ANOTHER R. G.

Virtues of an Uncommon Stone.

[1754, p. 62.]

AN UNCOMMON STONE, OF WHICH AN ACCOUNT WAS READ TO THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES, AT PARIS.

On the 15th of February, 1752, the workmen who were digging in a quarry in Montmartre, near Paris, about 80 yards from its mouth,

found a solid body in the form of a table, not like any sort of marble or flint, but rather resembling the plaster or limestone.

It is considerably harder on the superficies than within. Its colour borders upon that of agate, and is mix'd with some veins entirely black. It has been view'd by several learned men, and is supposed by them to be very antient.

Upon trial of its virtues, it is found to prevent and cure several diseases: in particular it is an antidote against weariness in the limbs, spasms, contractions, and other disorders proceeding from an undue tension of the nerves.

It is 4 feet 7 inches 2 lines long : 1 foot 10 inches 2 lines broad, and 2 feet 3 inches thick. Upon its face are 23 prominent letters of different sizes, disposed in 6 lines. The two O's which terminate the second and fourth line, and the two E's at the end of the third and sixth, seem to indicate that they have been either Italian verses, or some Latin epitaph.

A gentleman at Paris promises a considerable reward to the person who shall explain this inscription, and transmit an authentic instrument under his hand, containing his explanation, executed before some notary public.

INSCRIPTION ON THE STONE.

M.
O. n. u. R. a. Y. n. O.
M. E.
S. . . T. u. N. e. b. O.
V. . . r. . . . J. . . .
Q. . . U. E.

The Virtues of the Lee-Stone.

[1787, *Part II.*, pp. 1045, 1046.]

That curious piece of antiquity, called the Lee-penny, is a stone of a dark red colour and triangular shape, and its size about half an inch each side. It is set in a piece of silver coin, which, though much defaced, by some letters still remaining is supposed to be a shilling of Edward I., the cross being very plain, as it is on his shillings. It has been, by tradition, in the Lee family since the year 1320 odds; that is, a little after the death of King Robert Bruce, who having ordered his heart to be carried to the Holy Land, there to be buried, one of the noble family of Douglass was sent with it, and, it is said, got the crowned heart in his arms from that circumstance; but the person who carried the heart was Simon Locard of Lee, who just about this time borrowed a large sum of money from Sir William de

Lendsay, prior of Air, for which he granted a bond of annuity of ten pounds of silver, during the life of the said Sir William de Lendsay, out of his lands of Lee and Cartland. The original bond, dated 1323, and witnessed by the principal nobility of the country, is still remaining among the family papers.

As this was a great sum in those days, it is thought it was borrowed for that expedition ; and, from his being the person who carried the royal heart, he changed his name to Lockheart, as it is sometimes spelled, or Lockhart, and got a heart within a lock for part of his arms, with the motto, *Corda serata pando*. This Simon Lockhart having taken a Saracen prince, or chief, prisoner, his wife came to ransom him, and, on counting out the money or jewels, this stone fell out of her purse, which she hastily snatched up, which Simon Lockhart observing, insisted to have it, else he would not give up his prisoner. Upon this the lady gave it him, and told him its many virtues, viz., that it cured all diseases in cattle, and the bite of a mad dog both in man and beasts. It is used by dipping the stone in water, which is given to the diseased cattle to drink ; and the person who has been bit, and the wound, or part infected, is washed with the water. There are no words used in the dipping of the stone, nor any money taken by the servants without incurring the owner's displeasure. Many are the cures said to be performed by it, and people come from all parts of Scotland, and even as far up in England as Yorkshire, to get the water in which the stone is dipped, to give their cattle, when ill of the murrain especially, and black-leg. A great many years ago, a complaint was made to the ecclesiastical courts against the Laird of Lee, then Sir James Lockhart, for using witchcraft : a copy of their act is hereto annexed. There is no date ; but, both by the orthography, and the complainers being called Goodman of Raplock (a title then given to the smaller Lairds), and also by Sir James being the name of the Laird of Lee, it must at least be above an hundred years ago. It is said, when the plague was last at Newcastle, the inhabitants sent for the Lee-penny, and gave a bond for a large sum in trust for the loan ; and that they thought it did so much good, that they offered to pay the money, and keep the Lee-penny, but the gentleman would not part with it. A copy of this bond is very well attested to have been among the family papers, but supposed to have been spoiled, along with many more valuable ones, about fifty years ago, by rain getting into the charter-room, during a long minority, and no family residing at Lee.

The most remarkable cure performed upon any person, was that of a Lady Baird, of Saughtonhall, near Edinburgh, who, having been bit by a mad dog, was come the length of a hydrophobia ; upon which, having sent to beg the Lee-penny might be sent to her house, she used it for some weeks, drinking and bathing in the water it was dipped in, and was quite recovered. This happened above eighty

years ago, but it is very well attested, having been told by the Lady of the then Laird of Lee, and who died within these thirty years. She also told that her husband, Mr. Lockhart, and she, were entertained at Saughtonhall, by Sir — Baird and his lady, for several days, in the most sumptuous manner, on account of the lady's recovery, and in gratitude for the loan of the Lee-penny, so long as it was never allowed to be carried away from the house of Lee.

N.B.—It was tried by a lapidary, and found to be a stone; but of what kind he could not tell.

COPY OF AN ACT OF THE SYNOD AND ASSEMBLY.

“Apud Glasgow, the 25 Octobr.

“Synod. Sess. 2.

“Qubilk dye, amongst the referries of the brethern of the ministrie of Lanerk, it was propoundit to the Synode, that Gawen Hammiltone of Raplocke had preferit an complaint before them against Sir James Lockart of Lie, anent the superstitious vsing of an stene set in selver for the curing of diseased cattell, qlk, the said Gawen affirmit, could not be lawfully vsed, and that they had differit to give ony decisionne therein, till the advice of the Assemblie might be had concerning the same. The Assemblie having inquirit of the maner of vsing thereof, and particularlie vnderstoode, by examinationne of the said Laird of Lie, and otherwise, that the custome is onlie to cast the stene in sume water, and give the diseasit cattil thereof to drink, and qt the sam is dene wtout vsing onie words, such as charmers and sorcerers vse in their unlawfull practisess; and considering that in nature they are mony thinges seen to work strange effects, qrof no humane witt can give a reason, it having pleasit God to give vnto stones and herbes special virtues for the healing of mony infirmities in man and beast —advises the bretheren to surcease thir proces, as qrin they perceive no ground of offence; and admonishes the said Laird of Lie, in the vsing of the said stone, to tak heed that it be vsit heirafter wt the least scandal that possiblie may bie.—Extract out of the books of the Assemblie helden at Glasgow, and subscribed be thair clerk, at thair comand.

“M. ROBERT YOUNG,

“Clerk to the Assemblie at Glasgow.”

The Luck of Edenhall.

[1791, *Part II.*, p. 721.]

In an excursion to the North of England, I was easily prevailed upon to see the *Luck of Edenhall*,* celebrated in a ballad of Ritson's Select Collection of English Songs. The only description I can give you of it is, a very thin, bell-mouthed, beaker glass, deep and

* Edenhall, the antient seat of Sir Philip Musgrave, near Penrith, Cumberland.

narrow, ornamented on the outside with fancy work of coloured glass, and may hold something more than a pint.

Antient superstition may have contributed not a little to its preservation ; but that it should not, in a more enlightened age, or in moments of conviviality (see the Ballad), meet with one *gentle rap* (and a gentle one would be quite sufficient for an *ordinary glass* of the same substance), is to me somewhat wonderful. Superstition, however, cannot be entirely eradicated from the mind at once. The late agent of the family had such a *reverential regard* for this glass, that he would not suffer any person to touch it, and but few to see it. When the family, or other curious people, had a desire to drink out of it, a napkin was held underneath, lest any accident should befall it ; and it is still carefully preserved in a case made on purpose. The case is said to be the second, yet bears the marks of antiquity, and is charged with *its*.

Tradition, our only guide here, says, that a party of Fairies were drinking and making merry round a well near the Hall, called St. Cuthbert's well ; but, being interrupted by the intrusion of some curious people, they were frightened, and made a hasty retreat, and left the cup in question : one of the last screaming out,

If this cup should break or fall,
Farewell the Luck of Edenhall.

The ballad above alluded to is here inserted. It was written by the Duke of Wharton, and is called "The Earl's Defeat."—*To the tune of Chevy Chase.*

"On both sides slaughter and gigantic deeds."
(MILTON.)

God prosper long from being broke

The *Luck* of Edenhall* ;

A doleful drinking-bout I sing,

There lately did befall.

To chase the spleen with cup and can,

Duke Philip took his way ;

Babes yet unborn shall never see

The like of such a day.

The stout and ever-thirsty Duke

A vow to God did make,

His pleasure within Cumberland

Three live-long nights to take.

* A pint bumper at Sir Christopher Musgrave's. (N.B.—Ancestor of the present baronet.)

Sir Musgrave, too, of Martindale,
A true and worthy Knight,
Eftsoon with him a bargain made,
In drinking to delight.

The bumpers swiftly pass about,
Six in a hand went round ;
And with their calling for more wine,
They made the Hall resound.

Now when these merry tidings reach'd
The Earl of Harold's ears,
And am I (quoth he, with an oath)
Thus slighted by my Peers ?

Saddle my steed, bring forth my boots,
I'll be with them right quick ;
And, Master Sheriff, come you too ;
We'll know this scurvy trick.

"Lo, yonder doth Earl Harold come !"
Did one at table say :
"Tis well," replied the mettled Duke ;
"How will he get away ?"

When thus the Earl began : "Great Duke,
I'll know how this did chance,
Without inviting me ; sure this
You did not learn in France :

"One of us two, for this offence,
Under the board shall lie :
I know thee well, a Duke thou art ;
So some years hence shall I.

"But trust me, Wharton, pity 'twere
So much good wine to spill,
As these companions here may drink
Ere they have had their fill.

"Let thou and I, in bumpers full,
This grand affair decide."—
"Accurs'd be he," Duke Wharton said,
"By whom it is denied !"

To Andrews and to Hotham fair,
Many a pint went round ;
And many a gallant gentleman
Lay sick upon the ground.

When at the last the Duke espied
He had the Earl secure,
He plied him with a full pint glass,
Which laid him on the floor :

Who never spoke more words than these,
After he downward sunk :
" My worthy friends, revenge my fall ;
Duke Wharton sees me drunk."

Then, with a groan, Duke Philip took
The sick man by the joint,
And said, " Earl Harold, 'stead of thee,
Would I had drunk the pint !

" Alack ! my very heart doth bleed,
And doth within me sink ;
For surely a more sober Earl
Did never swallow drink !"

With that the Sheriff, in a rage
To see the Earl so smit,
Vow'd to revenge the dead-drunk Peer
Upon renown'd Sir Kit.

Then stepp'd a gallant 'Squire forth,
Of visage thin and pale ;
Lloyd was his name, and of Gang-hall,
Fast by the river Swale :

Who said, he would not have it told,
Where Eden river ran,
That unconcern'd he should sit by,—
" So, Sheriff, I'm your man !"

Now when these tidings reach'd the room,
Where the Duke lay in bed,
How that the Squire suddenly
Upon the floor was laid ;

" O heavy tidings !" quoth the Duke,
" Cumberland witness be,
I have not any toper more,
Of such account as he."

Like tidings to Earl Thanet came,
Within as short a space,
How that the Under-sheriff, too,
Was fallen from his place :

"Now God be with him," said the Earl,
"Sith 'twill no better be ;
I trust I have, within my town,
As drunken Knights as he."

Of all the number that were there,
Sir Bains he scorn'd to yield ;
But, with a bumper in his hand,
He stagger'd o'er the field.

Thus did this dire contention end,
And each man of the slain
Were quickly carried off to bed,
Their senses to regain.

God bless the King ! the Duchess fat !
And keep the land in peace !
And grant that drunkenness henceforth
'Mong Noblemen may cease !

And likewise bless our Royal Prince,
The nation's other hope !
And give us grace for to defy
The Devil and the Pope !

Yours, etc., W. M.

[1791, *Part II.*, pp. 1079.]

Your correspondent Antiquarius, p. 995, asks, whether, "from the letters with which the [case of the] *Luck of Edenhall* is charged," it may not "be conjectured that it was originally designed for a *sacramental chalice*?" This, you may tell him, the canons of the Church, which he will find in Lyndewoode's *Provinciale* [1679], render *impossible*. But I have no objection to think that it has been used as a drinking-glass by the superior of some religious house. My inability to procure drawings of this *ball* and *glass* (both which I have seen) alone prevents me from giving a new and handsome edition, with curious notes, of the *doleful drinking bout*, which, I have good authority to say, was *not* written by the Duke of Wharton. [See note 36.]

DEIRENSIS.

St. Cuthbert's Beads.

[1792, *Part I.*, pp. 21-23.]

Having never met with any rational account of certain stoney concretions, thrown up by the tides on a certain part of the shore at this place, and thinking them very extraordinary, I have attempted a description of them, which I request you to insert, with the drawings which accompany them (Pl. III. fig. 7, 8, 9, 10), in hopes it may excite the attention of the inquisitive and curious ; and that some satisfactory account of their nature and origin may be obtained.

VOL. III.

These stoney concretions are known here by the name of *St. Cuthbert's beads*; but how they came by that appellation I have not met with any intelligent account. St. Cuthbert was the eighth bishop of Lindisferne about the latter end of the seventh century, and is highly famed in legendary records for his piety and austerity when living, and for miracles performed by his body when dead. I think it not improbable, though I have never received any hint of the kind, that St. Cuthbert may have recommended his hearers to count, and keep a register, as it were, of their repetitions of certain devout formularies, each day or week, with these stones; and that thence they have obtained the name of St. Cuthbert's beads. There is a vulgar, superstitious tradition, that they are made by that holy personage.

The form of these concretions is generally that of a complete cylinder; the height of which commonly exceeds the diameter, though not always. They are of various sizes; few of them, however, exceeding three-fourths of an inch in length, and five lines in diameter; but many of them are very minute. In general they are of a dark clay colour; their surface is polished and shining, but surrounded at equal distances by circular furrows, seemingly dividing the concretion into so many smaller beads; but, so far as my trials have gone, are not separable at these divisions.

Both ends of the cylinder are very beautiful; the centre is indented, and of a pentagonal form, from which proceed *radii* to the circumference of the circle, and the margin is often somewhat elevated.

Each stone consists of two distinct parts, an exterior and central; the former hard and brittle; the latter softer, more friable, and commonly of a darker colour. The pentagonal portion penetrates the centre of each stone. This may be scooped entirely out with a pin, or probe. Some very short ones are to be met with where this is wanting, a beautiful pentagonal hole being alone observed. This, however, is rare, and appears rather to be accidental than natural.

Though these stones appear quite smooth, and of a dark clay colour, yet, when smartly struck with the blow of a common hammer, they shiver into many angular pieces, having a whitish crystalline appearance, exactly resembling the coarser calcareous spars. They are hard and brittle, but not so hard as to scratch glass, like the siliceous earths. While the exterior part of the bead thus shivers into pieces, the central portion either remains unaltered, or is, by the violence of the blow, bruised into a very dark clay-coloured powder. When the exterior part is pulverized, it is whitish.

Such is the appearance of the more regular formed of these concretions. They are not, however, all equally regular; the central part in all does not assume a pentagonal form. In many the radiated structure is scarcely discernible. On the sides of some are small protuberances, with concave smooth surfaces, having much the appearances of branches, or ramifications, as if the larger concretion

shooted out smaller ones from its sides. But these varieties are perhaps the effect of some accident.

Besides these concretions, that are known by the name of St. Cuthbert's beads, several others are to be met with on the same channel, not a little remarkable; *some* resembling the knob of a horn, or *cornucopia*. The point of this concretion is smooth, and rounded, but the base is rough and irregular, evidently fractured. From the apex of the horn, as from a centre, proceed at regular distances small furrows, which extend length-ways towards the base, and thus give the concretion a striped appearance. It is also irregularly surrounded by annular divisions, like the St. Cuthbert's beads, and, when broken, has a crystalline appearance, but it has no distinct central portion. The size of any of this kind that I have met with never exceeded the length of the first joint of the little finger. *Others* resemble stalactites, and probably are such; these are cylindrical and laminated. There are also slender-branched stones, the surface of which is indented with numerous small-pointed impressions. These resemble corals so much, that I have no doubt they are of that class.

All these concretions are found on the beach to the west of this island, but on no other part of the beach. Here they are loosely scattered amongst the shells, pebbles, stones, etc., that are thrown up by the surf. I have examined the rocks and larger stones in the places adjacent, but have never met with any resemblances of them. On the north-east side of the island, however, there is a large track of limestone, which abounds with these concretions. They lie length-ways, and in clusters; are deeply immersed, forming a part, as it were, of the substance of the limestone. Some are more superficial, and may be detached entire. They are evidently the same concretions with those I have just described, only they are not so regular, being compressed, or flattened, in many places, and their surfaces are coarser and unpolished. In none could I find the beautiful radiated end; and the greater part had no distinct central portion. The horned-like concretions, when separated from the rock, still more exactly resembled those I have described as found on the western beach, only in general the latter are much larger.

The earth of all these I have found to be purely calcareous. When powdered, it effervesced violently with the vitriolic and acetous acid, and entirely dissolved in the muriatic, from which last it could again be precipitated by the vegetable alkalies.

To prove that the effervescence is occasioned by the discharge of fixed air, I have impregnated water with it by means of Dr. Nooth's apparatus.

Struck with the difference in the appearance of the central and cortical part of the St. Cuthbert's beads, I subjected them separately to trials with the acids. In doing of which, I as carefully as possible separated the two parts, and reduced them to powder; and pouring

the vitriolic acid upon each, I thought the central part effervesced much less violently than the exterior. Not satisfied, however, from this, of the truth, I reduced a whole bead to powder, without separating the two parts, and poured upon it some muriatic acid: it effervesced with great violence; but on examination I found a small quantity of dark clay-coloured powder undissolved, evidently the central part. I varied the experiment, and poured upon a bead, in its perfect state, the muriatic acid, which acted violently upon it, soon dissolving all the exterior part, and leaving the interior portion quite detached, and upon which it seemed to have had no effect. This interior part retained its pentagonal form, and was besides beautifully ribbed.

From these experiments, I trust, it appears that the exterior and major part of the concretion is a pure calcareous earth; and that the interior part is different. But, to what class of earths it is referable, I have not tried; however, I have little doubt of finding it argillaceous.

Such are the natural appearances of the concretions called St. Cuthbert's beads, so little known; and of whose origin I can form no determinate opinion. I think, however, it is plain, and will be generally allowed, that they must have had some other mode of existence (if I may so speak) than what we find them on the beach, or incased in the limestone.

How are we to suppose them originally produced? Do they grow after the manner of corals? Are they petrifications? Are they produced by a sort of crystallization? Do they increase in size, like minerals, by an opposition of new matter? Are they formed in the limestone rock? Or did they not rather exist previous to their fixation there?

If any of your correspondents will favour me, through the channel of your useful and scientific publication, with an answer to these queries, or with a few pertinent remarks on the subject of the above-mentioned concretions, he will in a particular manner oblige

R. W.

Calving Superstition.

[1784, *Part I.*, p. 258.]

A mite towards an history of the force of Imagination in Brutes: A Mr. William Chamberlain, an intelligent farmer and grazier at Ayleston, in Leicestershire, had six cows that cast calf, occasioned, he thinks, by the miscarriage of *one* in the same pasture, by a kind of contagious sympathy; which common experience, he says, has established as a fact. You may, if you deem it worth their notice, lay this matter before the publick.

W. B.

[1784, *Part I.*, p. 350.]

The common people in Suffolk are of the same opinion. I met my labourer carrying an abortive calf, and asking him what he was going to do with it, he said, "To bury it in the gateway of the close, for the other three cows to pass over, else they would all cast their calves."

Curious Enumeration of Vulgar Errors.

[1784, *Part I.*, pp. 405, 406.]

Having accidentally been this day a spectator of the funeral procession of Sir Barnard Turner, I was referred, by a learned friend, in consequence of a conversation on the subject of the delay in moving the body, to Mr. Barrington's "Observations on the more antient Statutes," p. 474; where it clearly appears that, whatever was the real cause of the delay, it could not possibly have been from any *legal arrest*.* "It is difficult," says the honourable and very learned Judge, "to account for many of the prevailing vulgar errors with regard to what is supposed to be law. Such are, *that the body of a debtor may be taken in execution after his death*; which, however, was practised in Prussia, before this present king abolished it by the 'Code Frederique.' Other vulgar errors are, that the old statutes have prohibited the planting of vineyards, or the use of sawing-mills; which last notion I should conceive to have been occasioned by 5 and 6 Edw. VI., cap. xxii., forbidding what are called *gig-mills*, as they were supposed to be prejudicial to the woollen manufacture. It is supposed likewise to be penal to open a coal-mine, or to kill a crow, within five miles of London; as also to shoot with a wind-gun, or to carry a dark lanthorn. The first of these I take to arise from a statute of Henry the Seventh, prohibiting the use of a cross-bow; and the other from Guy Fawkes's *dark lanthorn* in the powder plot. To these vulgar errors may be added the supposing that the king signs the death-warrant (as it is called) for the execution of a criminal; as also, that there is a statute which obliges the owners of asses to crop their ears, lest the length of them should frighten the horses which they meet on the road. To these vulgar errors may be perhaps added the notion, that a woman's marrying a man under the gallows will save him from the execution. This probably arose from a wife having brought an appeal against the murderer of her husband, who afterwards repenting the prosecution of her lover, not only forgave the offence, but was willing to marry the appellee. It is also a very

* Much has been said, on the present occasion, about the Spanish ambassadors in one of the chapels of Westminster Abbey, who are said to have been kept above ground for debt; but this story also, we have no doubt, may be classed among the vulgar errors, and attributed to the ignorance of the vergers, like the old story of the lady who died by pricking her finger in working on a Sunday.

prevailing error, that those who are born at sea belong to Stepney parish. I may likewise add to these, that anyone may be *put into the Crown-office* for no cause whatsoever, or the most trifling injury. An ingenious correspondent, to whom I have not only this obligation, suggests two additional vulgar errors: when a man designs to marry a woman who is in debt, if he takes her from the hands of a priest clothed only in her shift, it is supposed that he will not be liable to her engagements. The second is, that there was no land-tax before the reign of William the Third."

These curious particulars, Mr. Urban, are from the "Observations on Stat. 3, Henry VIII.," whence, I am persuaded, your readers will not be displeased to see a further extract:

"Not only physicians are intended by this law to be put upon the liberal footing which that most learned and useful profession merits from the publick, but surgeons also, who receive a further encouragement from a statute of the fifth of Henry the Eighth, which exempts them from an attendance upon juries. It may, perhaps, be thought singular to suppose that this exemption from serving on juries is the foundation of the vulgar error that a surgeon or butcher (from the barbarity of their business) may be challenged as jurors."

Salt placed on Dead Bodies.

[1785, *Part I.*, p. 328.]

It is apprehended that what your correspondent, Mr. Bickerstaff, describes as found in St. Mary's churchyard, at Leicester, and imagines a plate once charged with salt, and laid on a corpse [see Note 37] was a *patten* intombed in the coffin of some priest or incumbent of that church.

The custom of putting a plate of salt on the belly of a deceased corpse, is desired to be accounted for. Is it to prevent any discharge from the navel after death? or, is it still retained?

Q. Q. Q.

[1785, *Part II.*, p. 603.]

Your instructive correspondent, Q. Q. Q., p. 328, of this year's Magazine, having met with no answer to his enquiry, about a plate of salt laid on the deceased; I will venture to inform him (after I have bid him recollect, that the place of the interment was in church), that it was a custom in Leicester and its shire, yet continued, to place a dish or plate of salt on a corpse, to prevent its swelling and purging, as the term is. To account for the partial corrosion of the pewter, that it prevailed chiefly on the margin of the plate, and so slightly in its calix, we may suppose it was protected by its saline contents from the action of the morbid matter; for the effluvia of salt may pervade or overflow its container or charger, as readily as magnetic virtue; and

the lips of the plate possessing little or no preventive salt, the sanies was at liberty, *there*, to effect the greater impression.

Yours, etc., W. BICKERSTAFFE.

[1787, *Part II.*, p. 1088.]

A passage in Dr. Campbell's "Philosophical Survey of the North of Ireland," p. 210, reminds me of the query in vol. lv., p. 328, answered p. 603 (I cannot find the answer, p. 706, mentioned in the Index), about placing a plate of salt on the bellies of dead persons. The Doctor says, in Ireland "the plate of salt is placed over the *heart*," and he supposes "they consider the salt as an *emblem* of the *incorruptible part*, the body itself being the type of corruption." Your correspondent Bickerstaff gives a much more philosophical solution of the custom.

Charm for an Ague.

[1784, *Part I.*, p. 325.]

How can one account for some things? Would any man in his senses have ever expected to find, and under the sign of the cross, the following Christian charm for an ague (of which I have been in possession these twenty years) in Mr. Marsden's excellent "History of Sumatra," p. 342, used, I suppose, by the natives of that island? "When Christ saw the cross, He trembled and shaked; and they said unto Him, 'Hast Thou an ague?' And He said unto them, 'I have neither ague nor fever;' and whosoever bears these words, either in writing or in mind, shall never be troubled with ague or fever. So help Thy servants, O Lord, who put their trust in Thee;" *i.e.*, who believe that this charm will cure them.

I can only account for it on this principle, that as it is a piece of easy superstition, and requires nothing more for its efficacy than to gabble the words in any language, the Portuguese, who abound on that coast, must have communicated it to the natives, and, as everyone is glad to get rid of an ague, of course they could have no objection to the cure.

Yours, etc., P.

Treasure Finding.

[1803, *Part I.*, pp. 411, 412.]

In Dunsford's "Memoirs of Tiverton" (4to, Exeter, 1790, p. 285, note 50), is the following very extraordinary tale:

"Many attempts have been made by poor workmen, who frequently left their daily employ, to discover money supposed to be hid near this chapel, without success; it was therefore proposed, that some person should lodge in the chapel, for a night, to obtain preternatural direction respecting it. Two farmers, at length, complied with my wishes, and ventured one night, about nine, aided by strong beer, to approach the hallowed walls: they trembled exceedingly at the sudden

appearance of a white owl, that flew from a broken window of the building, with the solemn message, that considerable treasures lay hid in certain fields of the barton ; that if they would carefully dig there, and diligently attend the labourers, to prevent purloining, they would undoubtedly find them. The farmers attended to the important notice, instantly employed many workmen in the fields described, and I was lately informed had discovered the valuable deposit."

The folly and superstition which so strongly mark this story should have passed unnoticed, had not the author affected, in other parts of the work, to possess a mind superior to the prejudices which influence the great bulk of mankind. For instance, in a note at p. 103, he says :

"The light of the present age hath shewn us, that all men are born equal ; that two sorts of distinctions only can exist between them, a natural, and acquired one, proceeding from talents and virtue, and from the rank which those qualities procure them in society ; and the other an absurd one, which depends upon opinion and prejudice, and which has very little weight now but with those who are interested in such an opinion."

Surely he who can believe that owls are employed as solemn messengers for the discovery of hidden treasure, has no great right to ridicule the *OPINION* and prejudices of others, however absurd they may be.

R.

Second Sight.

[1736, pp. 259, 260.]

The following is a very remarkable vision of a Highland Seer, who is famous among the Mountains, and known by the Name of Second-Sighted Sawney. Had he been able to write, we might probably have seen this Vision sooner in print ; for it happen'd to him very early in the late hard winter ; and was drawn up by a Student of Glasgow, who took the whole Relation from him, and stuck close to the Facts, tho' he has delivered them in his own Style.

[The account that follows is a political allegory of no importance to modern readers, except to show how very generally the possession of second sight was believed in.]

[1777, pp. 111, 112.]

The following remarks upon the Second Sight, wherewith some of the inhabitants of the Highlands of Scotland are still supposed to be haunted, are extracted from the truly ingenious "Essays" of the celebrated Dr. Beattie, lately printed at Edinburgh, in a large quarto volume, consisting of "Essays on Truth : on Poetry, and Music : on Laughter and Ludicrous Composition : and on the Utility of Classical Learning." Your readers will, I doubt not, be pleased with the senti-

ments of this philosopher upon so curious a subject. They occur in pp. 480, 1, 2 of the work, and will not be deemed unworthy of a place in your valuable Magazine, if an occasional correspondent is not greatly mistaken in his opinion. He has therefore taken the trouble of transcribing them, and hopes they will be inserted as soon as possible.

"I do not find sufficient evidence for the reality of Second Sight, or at least of what is commonly understood by that term. A treatise on the subject was published in the year 1762, in which many tales were told of persons, whom the author believed to have been favoured, or haunted, with these illuminations; but most of the tales were trifling and ridiculous; and the whole work betrayed on the part of the compiler, such extreme credulity, as could not fail to prejudice many readers against his system. That any of these visionaries are liable to be swayed in their declarations by sinister views, I will not say; though a gentleman of character assured me, that one of them offered to sell him this unaccountable talent for half-a-crown. But this I think may be said with confidence, that none but ignorant people pretend to be gifted in this way. And in them it may be nothing more, perhaps, than short fits of sudden sleep or drowsiness attended with lively dreams, and arising from some bodily disorder, the effect of idleness, low spirits, or a gloomy imagination. For it is admitted, even by the most credulous highlanders, that, as knowledge and industry are propagated in their country, the Second Sight disappears in proportion; and nobody ever laid claim to this faculty, who was much employed in the intercourse of social life. Nor is it at all extraordinary, that one should have the appearance of being awake, and should even think one's self so, during these fits of dozing; or that they should come on suddenly, and while one is engaged in some business. The same thing happens to persons much fatigued, or long kept awake, who frequently fall asleep for a moment, or for a longer space, while they are standing or walking, or riding on horseback. Add but a lively dream to this slumber, and (which is the frequent effect of disease) take away the consciousness of having been asleep; and a superstitious man, who is always hearing and believing tales of Second Sight, may easily mistake his dream for a waking vision; which, however, is soon forgotten when no subsequent occurrence recalls it to his memory; but which, if it shall be thought to resemble any future event, exalts the poor dreamer into a highland prophet. This conceit makes him more recluse and more melancholy than ever, and so feeds his disease, and multiplies his visions; which, if they are not dissipated by business or society, may continue to haunt him as long as he lives; and which, in their progress through the neighbourhood, receive some new tincture of the marvellous from every mouth that promotes their circulation. As to the prophetic nature of this Second Sight, it cannot be admitted at all. That the deity should

work a miracle, in order to give intimation of the frivolous things that these tales are made up of, the arrival of a stranger, the nailing of a coffin, or the colour of a suit of cloathes ; and that these intimations should be given for no end, and to those persons only who are idle and solitary, who speak Erse, or who live among mountains and deserts, is like nothing in nature or providence that we are acquainted with ; and must therefore, unless it were confirmed by satisfactory proof (which is not the case), be rejected as absurd and incredible. The visions, such as they are, may reasonably enough be ascribed to a dis-tempered fancy. And that in them, as well as in our ordinary dreams, certain appearances should, on some rare occasions, resemble certain events, is to be expected from the laws of chance ; and seems to have in it nothing more marvellous or supernatural, than that the parrot, who deals out his scurrilities at random, should sometimes happen to salute the passenger by his right appellation."

[1822, *Part II.*, pp. 598, 599.]

Amongst the many popular superstitions, which prevail even at the present day, the supposed, or rather pretended faculty of Second Sight may be ranked. It is chiefly found among the inhabitants of the Highlands of Scotland, those of the Western Isles, and of Ireland. By this supplemental faculty of sight, it is pretended, certain appearances, predictive of future events, present themselves suddenly and spontaneously before persons so gifted, without any endeavour or desire on their part to see them. Accounts differ much respecting this faculty : some make it hereditary ; which is denied by others. The same difference arises respecting the power of communicating it. But, according to an account from a gentleman at Strathspay to Mr. Aubrey, some of the seers acknowledged the possibility of teaching it.

The visions, attendant on Second Sight, are not confined to solemn or important events. The future visit of a mountebank, or piper ; a plentiful draught of fish ; the arrival of common travellers ; or, if possible, still more trifling matters than these, are foreseen by the seers. Not only aged men and women have the Second Sight, but also children, horses, and cows. Children, endowed with that faculty, manifest it by crying aloud, at the very time that a corpse appears to a seer : of this many instances could be given. That horses possess it, is likewise plain, from their violent and sudden starting, when their rider, or a seer in company with him, sees a vision of any kind, by night or by day. It is observable of a horse, that he will not go forwards towards the apparition, but must be led round, at some distance from the common road ; his terror is evident, from his becoming all over in a profuse sweat, although quite cool a moment before. Balaam's ass seems to have possessed this power or faculty ; and, perhaps, what we improperly style a startlish horse, may be one who has the gift of the

Second Sight. That cows have the Second Sight, is proved by the following circumstance : If a woman, whilst milking a cow, happen to have a vision of that kind, the cow runs away in a great fright at the same instant, and cannot, for some time, be brought to stand quietly.

To judge of the meaning of many visions, or the time in which they will be accomplished, requires observation and experience. In general, the time of accomplishment bears some relation to the time of the day in which they are seen. Thus, visions seen early in the morning (which seldom happens), will be much sooner accomplished than those appearing at noon ; and those seen at noon will take place in a much shorter time than those happening at night : sometimes the accomplishment of the last does not fall out within a year or more.

The appearance of a person wrapped in a shroud, is, in general, a prognostic of the death of the party. The time when it will happen may be judged from the height it reaches ; for if it be not seen above the middle, death is not to be expected for a year or more ; but when the shroud appears closed about the head, the accomplishment is not many hours distant.

If, in a vision, a woman is seen standing near a man's left hand, she will become his wife ; if there are two or three about him, he will marry them all in succession, according to their proximity. A spark of fire falling on the belly of a married woman predicts her delivery of a dead child ; the like spark falling on her arm betokens she shall shortly carry a dead child. If a seat, in which a person is sitting, suddenly appears empty, although he hath not moved, this is a certain presage that such person will very shortly die.

Persons who have not long been gifted with Second Sight, after seeing a vision without doors, on coming into a house, and approaching the fire, will immediately fall into a swoon. All those that have the Second Sight do not see these appearances at the same time ; but if one having this faculty designedly touches his fellow seer, at the instant that a vision appears to him, in that case it will be seen by both.

During the appearance of a vision, the eyelids of some of the seers are so erected and distended, that they cannot close them otherwise than by drawing them down with their fingers, or by employing others to do it for them.

N.

Thirteen at Table.

[1796, *Part II.*, p. 573.]

Dining lately with a friend, our conviviality was suddenly interrupted by the discovery of a maiden lady, who observed that our party consisted of thirteen. Her fears, however, were not without hope, till she found, after a very particular enquiry, that none of her

married friends were likely to make any addition to the number. She was then fully assured that one of the party would die within the twelvemonth. Though I did not in any degree partake of the old lady's apprehensions, yet my curiosity was excited, and I was at a loss to account for the origin of this vulgar error. You, Mr. Urban, or some of your correspondents, will, I dare say, be able to assign a reason for the prevalence of this popular persuasion ; which will confer a favour on many of your readers.

INCREDULUS.

[1796, *Part II.*, p. 636.]

One of your ingenious correspondents, who styles himself Incredulus, informs us, p. 573, that, in a company where he happened to dine, a maiden lady was suddenly alarmed by observing that the party consisted of thirteen persons, and, consequently, that one of them would die within the twelvemonth. The party, I suppose, were some of the wise men of Gotham, who attempted, as tradition informs us, to hedge-in the cuckoo. The ladies were certainly of that description. For, you will observe, Mr. Urban, that "their conviviality," that is their wit and their merriment, was interrupted and depressed by the lady's alarming discovery. The worthy gentleman, your correspondent, seems to have been thrown into some perplexity on this occasion. "His curiosity," he tells us, "was excited ; he was at a loss to account for this prevailing opinion ;" and in this state of anxiety he applies for satisfaction to the oracle, the *Gentleman's Magazine*. If this learned writer is inclined to employ his sagacity on the fancies, the dreams, and the follies of old women, let him study some of the following questions, which, no doubt, are founded upon principles equally *rational* and *satisfactory* as the enquiry he proposes.

Why are ghosts usually transported into the Red Sea ? Why is the howling of a dog, the screeching of an owl, the clicking of an insect, or a loud knock at the bed's-head of a sick person, deemed infallible signs of death ? Why is it supposed that a slice of bride-cake, drawn nine times through a wedding-ring, will excite prophetic dreams of love and marriage ? Why is a dead man's hand reported to have the quality of dispelling wens and tumours ? Why is a halter, with which anyone has been hanged, reckoned a cure for the head-ache ? Why are the chips of a gibbet used as a charm or a preservation against the ague ? Why is a stone with a hole in it hung at the bed's head to prevent the night-mare ? What grounds are there to imagine that the wounds of a murdered person will bleed on being touched by the murderer ? Why should it be thought extremely unlucky to kill a cricket, a swallow, a martin, a robin, or a wren ? Why is two persons washing their hands in the same water, supposed to forebode a quarrel ? Why does every old woman hold it as an indispensable rule to set her hen upon an odd number of eggs ?

Why is the seventh son of a seventh son accounted an infallible doctor? Why is a pillow, filled with the feathers of a pigeon, said to prevent an easy death? Why is the over-turning of a salt-cellar reckoned an unlucky omen? Why is it usual to throw an old shoe after a person for the sake of good luck? What philosophical reason can be given for believing that a child's caul can preserve a man from drowning? Why is it deemed lucky to put on a stocking the inside outwards? Upon what principle is it customary for women to sit cross-legged in order to bring their friends good luck at cards?

If any of your correspondents will condescend to answer these questions; or if the learned querist, who styles himself *Incredulus*, will employ his pen on these important subjects, you will be able to produce some curious disquisitions, which cannot fail of being highly acceptable to many Gothamites, unlearned gentlemen, and inquisitive old women.

P. Q.

A Murderer's Charm.

[1749, p. 88.]

A Charm, or Protection, found in a Linen Purse of Jackson, the Murderer and Smuggler, who died (a Roman Catholic) in Chichester Goal.

"Sancti tres Reges
"Gaspar, Melchior, Balthasar,
"Orate pro nobis nunc et in hora
"Mortis nostræ.

"Ces billets ont touche aux trois testes de S. S. Roys à Cologne.
"Ils font pour les voyageurs, contre les mal-heurs de chemins, maux
"de teste, mal-caduque, fievres, sorcellerie, toute sorte de malefice,
"et mort subite."

In English thus :

Ye three Holy Kings,
Gaspar, Melchior, Balthasar,
Pray for us now, and in the hour of death.

These papers have touch'd the three heads of the holy kings at
Cologne.

They are to preserve travellers from accidents on the road, head-aches, falling sickness, fevers, witchcraft, all kinds of mischief, and sudden death.

Burial on South Side of Church.

[1802, Part I., p. 209.]

We all know the general custom, practice, or superstition, if you please, of interring the dead on the South side of our churches, in

preference to the North side ; so much so, that this latter place is never dug open but to throw therein poor unfortunate strangers who may happen to die in the parish, and those who sign their own *felo de se*. Yet all do not know why or wherefore there is such a dissolutionary partiality to this South portion of dust to receive defunct mortality. The cause is thus defined. On this said Southern point the "warm" sun darts his genial influence, within whose rays no imp, or fairy, demon of ill, or spectre pale, can haunt the silent graves, to torture hovering souls unwilling to leave their clay-cold corpses, to seek in midway air an imperfect immortality. Chilling blasts, damps, and space for rites infernal, premeditating direful wreck on holy fanes, mark the Northern sod ; on every blade of blighted grass lurks some supernatural foe to quiet in man's last abode. The Church overshadows this precluded spot ; there, where the all-cheering orb of day is never "felt," has Fancy bred a train of dreaded miseries, driving fading Life to sink in Death's more blest domain, midst hallowed mould, midst spirits good, and good men's prayers !

AN ARCHITECT.

Death-Scented Flowers.

[1866, *Part II.*, p. 73.]

I have found it a popular notion among that class of people to whom we are most indebted for the preservation of much interesting folk-lore—country cottagers—that the peculiar scent of the hawthorn is "exactly like the smell of the Great Plague of London." This belief may have been traditionally held during the last two centuries, and have arisen from circumstances noted at the period of the Great Plague.

Is it recorded that a resemblance to the scent of the hawthorn was noticed in anything that occurred at that terrible time ? I am not aware that the powerful perfume of the gorse has ever been compared to anything connected with death ; but I happen to know that it produces in many people so overpowering a sensation of faintness and sickness, that they cannot, with comfort, pass by the flowering gorse bushes without covering their mouths and noses with a handkerchief. It was only the other day that I was talking with a gardener, and saying something about the sweetness of the gilliflower, when the man observed, "It's a pity that it smells like death !" I asked him what he meant ? He replied that he did not exactly know what was meant ; but that it was an old saying that a gilliflower smelt like death ; and that he had that fancy himself. This "old saying" was quite new to me, and I am not aware if it has been hitherto noted.

I am, etc., CUTHBERT BEDE.

Faculty of Abrac.

[1753, p. 518.]

I was extremely entertained, and delighted with the copy of that antient and venerable manuscript concerning Free-Masonry with which you first obliged the publick in your September magazine, and which is since unartfully printed in various shapes.

The brotherhood were so well pleased with it that there was not a Magazine to be got in Norwich, and orders were given for a fresh supply. You must have found this by the demand. Mr. Locke's notes and explanatory remarks do the paper great honour, and his declaration and the lady's have contributed to increase the number of Masons in several lodges.

There are, however, some passages so obscure that Mr. Locke himself knows not what to make of them: "The Wey of Wynninge the Facultye of Abrac" is one, which I shall endeavour to elucidate.

I apprehend that by the "Facultye of Abrac" is meant the chimerical virtues ascribed to the magical term ABRACADABRA, written or repeated in a particular manner. This fanciful charm is supposed to have been invented by the elder Serenus Samoniacus, in the time of the Emperors Severus and Caracalla, and was thought to be efficacious in curing agues and preventing other diseases.—The way of writing it was thus:

A B R A C A D A B R A
 A B R A C A D A B R
 A B R A C A D A B
 A B R A C A D A
 A B R A C A D
 A B R A C A
 A B R A C
 A B R A
 A B R
 A B
 A

A paper so inscribed was tied about the neck of the patient.

It is the more probable that this may be the true explanation of the facultye of Abrac, because we see that several of the mysteries of Masonry enumerated in this old piece are obscurely, imperfectly, or corruptly expressed. For instance, Peter Gower. Who would imagine that Peter Gower was Pythagoras in disguise? Yet how naturally and satisfactorily is the corruption accounted for, by the medium which Mr. Locke has so happily discovered. Pythagoras seems to have been fated to transmigrations. The transmigration of Euphorbus into Pythagoras seems scarce more incredible, than (at first sight) the transformation of Pythagoras into Peter Gower.

Bird Lore.[1868, *Part I.*, pp. 470-479.]

[Introductory matter and passages which comment on the subject are omitted.]

In the animal kingdom birds have come in for a full share of legendary lore. Thus the owl has given rise to widespread superstitions, and has ever been considered a bird of ill-omen, and its unexpected appearance a portent of death and disaster. Even whole nations have been influenced by this belief; Rome twice underwent the ceremony of lustration owing to the appearance in its temples of the dreaded great owl. Shakespeare constantly alludes to the "bird of night" ("Midsummer Night's Dream," act v., sc. 1; "Henry VI., Part I., act iv., sc. 2; "Macbeth," act i., sc. 2).

The owl which popular belief has invested with supernatural power, is undoubtedly the barn, or screech-owl. The wild legend of the banshee, a legend not alone confined to the sister isle, has probably originated in the cry of the useless and harmless barn-owl. Its presence is linked with the fate of an aristocratic race; tradition says the appearance of two spectral owls of immense size, on the battlements of Wardour Castle, Wiltshire, still warns the family of Arundell of the approach of the last enemy. It is a curious fact that the same superstition is associated with the cry of the owl in an opposite quarter of the globe. In the forest lands of the far west, the redskin shrinks with alarm as he listens to the dismal screeching of the horned owl, firmly believing that its wild cries portend some dire calamity. Wilson, the American ornithologist, in describing the cry of these owls, says: "This ghostly watchman has frequently warned me of the approach of morning, sweeping down and around my fires, uttering a loud and sudden 'Waugh O! Waugh O!' sufficient to have alarmed a whole garrison. He has other nocturnal solos, one of which very strikingly resembles the half-suppressed scream of a person suffocating or throttled." Sir John Richardson narrates the circumstances of a party of Scottish Highlanders who passed a long winter's night of intense fear, in the depths of an American pine forest. They had made their bivouac fire from wood taken from an Indian tomb; all night long the shrieks of the Virginian owl rang in their affrighted ears—cries which they at once judged came from the spirit of the old warrior bemoaning his desecrated resting-place.

Next to the owl, the raven has ever been considered a bird of evil omen. By the Romans he was dedicated to Apollo. But it was more particularly amongst the northern nations that the grim raven was invested with supernatural powers. He was the bird of Odin, and bears no insignificant place in northern mythology; *par excellence* the bird of the battle-field, his very likeness has floated over many a scene of slaughter, for the old heathen banner of Denmark was the raven—that mystic banner, which, says the legend, was woven in one night

by three weird sisters, and called "Reafen," or "Rumfan," from bearing the figure of the raven.

On the Bayeux tapestry, William the Conqueror, who was descended from the old Vikings, is represented at the battle of Hastings as going into the fight with a banner on which is portrayed the bird of Odin. When, however, in Denmark, "Thor's hammer" fell before "Christ's Cross," the old raven banner was superseded by the white cross of the Dannebrog.

Shakespeare repeatedly made mention of the raven, or night crow. Thus Othello is made to say:

"O it comes o'er my memory,
As doth the raven o'er the infectious house,
Boding to all,"

referring to the belief that this bird haunts the neighbourhood of the house where death is impending. As an illustration of the horror inspired by the raven in more modern times, we are told of a woman seeking relief from a board of guardians, on the plea of "grief" brought on by a croaking raven flying over her cottage, from which she was so frightened and depressed as to be incapable of work. (see *Notes and Queries*, 1st ser., vol. vii., p. 496).

There is an old Cornish tradition (*Ibid.*, vol. viii., p. 618) that King Arthur is still living, in the form of a raven, changed into that shape by magic, and that some day he will resume his kingly form again.

The magpie is considered either a lucky or unlucky bird, according to the number seen together. Our readers will remember the old lines:

"One for sorrow;
Two for mirth;
Three for a wedding;
Four for death."

The same augury holds good throughout Great Britain; occasionally the last line runs, "Four for a birth;" but this is not the correct reading. Brand (p. 532), quoting from "The Glossary to the Complaynt of Scotland," remarks: "Many an old woman would more willingly see the devil, who bodes no more ill-luck than he brings, than a magpie perching on a neighbouring tree." It is very probable that the superstitious feeling respecting this bird is of Scandinavian origin. In Norway the magpie is considered almost a sacred bird, and it is held extremely unlucky to kill one. The northern magpies appear quite to understand this, and give themselves airs accordingly. Nearly every cottage has a pair in attendance, which, from long immunity, have become singularly tame and fearless—hopping about the door, or perched on the roof, heedless of passers-by, evidently considering themselves part of the establishment.

There is a belief in some parts of the country that robins will sing

near the window where a person is dying. Another legend is, that the robin attended our Lord on the cross, and was there sprinkled with His blood, the marks of which the little songster still carries on his ruddy breast.

There is also a curious Welsh superstition connected with the red-breast (*Notes and Queries*, 1st ser., vol. iii., p. 328), that far away, in a land of woe and fire, "day by day does the little bird bear in his bill a drop of water to quench the flame; so near does he fly, that his feathers are scorched, and hence he is named Bron-rhuddyn" (breast-burnt). From his devotion to the cause of the lost, he feels the biting cold of winter more than any other bird, and has, consequently, a greater claim on our gratitude.

There is a German legend about the cross-bill very similar to the one narrated of the redbreast, which Longfellow has rendered in some well-known lines. This legend relates that, when our Saviour was on the cross, this little bird strove unceasingly to release him, patiently working hour after hour, with damaged beak and blood-stained plumage, to draw out the cruel nails; and, in token of such rare devotion, the faithful bird has ever since retained the crossed beak and ruddy plumage. (The legend is related in *Once a Week*, vol. iii., p. 722.)

A curious superstition prevails in some of the southern counties connected with game birds—that a person cannot die easily on a bed stuffed with game feathers, as, when such is the case, they invariably prolong the death agony—using a provincial phrase, the "poor soul dies hard;" and it is not an uncommon occurrence in a lingering illness, and when the presence of game feathers in the bed is suspected, to expedite the departure of the sufferer by changing his bed.

The poetic legend of the death-song of the dying swan is of considerable antiquity.

During the autumn migrations of the wild swan, these birds frequently fly by night, and in dull cloudy weather keep up a continual calling. Familiar as the sound is to dwellers in the country, it has given rise to a wild and wide-spread superstition. We are told that this mysterious nocturnal melody proceeds from a pack of demon dogs, yclept "Gabriel's hounds," or, as they are sometimes termed, the "Devil's dandy-dogs." Two forms of this wild legend are prevalent—the one common to Wales, and the south-west of England, that this yelping pack are evil spirits hounding forward the souls of the lost to their final punishment; the other bears a striking resemblance to the German story of the "Wild Huntsman," the demon knight called Hackelubarend, and is doubtless of Teutonic origin. (See Rev. S. B. Gould's "Iceland: its Scenes and Sagas.")

Those who have sailed up the Bosphorus may have observed, in the twilight or early morning, flocks of sober-coloured, petrel-like

birds, skimming backwards and forwards, close to the water, never resting for a moment. The Turks believe that these birds are the souls of the damned, thus compelled, by a just retribution, to wander for ever, hopelessly and unceasingly, over water as restless and unquiet as themselves. Sailors are proverbially superstitious, and ever consider the presence of the petrel as the signal of foul weather, and style them "Mother Cary's chickens."

There is a remarkable legend connected with the appearance of a phantom-bird, with a white breast and of an unknown species, which appears at the death of the members of an old Devonshire family of the name of Oxenham. We are told that, when any of this family are on their death-bed, this strange bird, with the white breast, is seen to flutter for a time about the bed, and then suddenly to vanish. Chambers, quoting from "Howell's Familiar Letters," says that Mr. James Howell saw, in a lapidary's shop in London, a marble slab to be sent into Devonshire, with an inscription that "John Oxenham, Mary his sister, James his son, and Elizabeth his mother, had each the appearance of such a bird fluttering about their beds as they were dying." [See *post*, p. 212.]

Custom of Plucking Geese Alive.

[1756, p. 509.]

A friend told me lately, that in a cold winter a year or two ago, as he was riding over the moors near Bridgewater, in Somersetshire, he saw a great number of geese dead upon the moors; and upon enquiring into the cause of it, he was informed that it was the custom of the people there, every year, to pick the down off the geese while they were alive, in order to sell it, and then to send the naked geese upon the moors again, where, if the weather grew cold before their feathers grew again, they languished and died. It was some time before I could believe such barbarity was practised in a country which calls itself Christian, and where the principles of humanity are carefully taught. But as I am well assured it is a fact, I beg the favour of you to publish this account in your next magazine, that some humane and generous persons, who live about these places, may do all they can to put a stop to it.

A. B.

Duck Superstition.

[1809, *Part I.*, p. 80.]

Dec. 24. An instance of horrid barbarity, coupled with gross superstition, lately occurred at Hoo, in Kent. A farmer having a duck in his possession which layed eggs of a dun colour, the animal was immediately considered unlucky, and a resolution taken to dispose of it. A distemper, just at the time, broke out among the farmer's cattle,

which was attributed to the ill-fated bird. A female servant in the family, whose superstition can only be equalled by her cruelty, secretly took the resolution to destroy the animal, conceiving it would avert farther disaster. For this purpose she heated the oven, and one morning precipitated the bird into it alive—but though its feathers were burnt, the vital spark still remained:—three successive mornings did she repeat this inhuman process, before the animal died. On avowing the circumstance, she was overwhelmed with reproaches, and threatened with punishment. The threat operated so powerfully upon her, that she fell into convulsions, which in all probability will speedily terminate her existence.

White-bird a Presage of Death.

[1822, *Part I.*, p. 311.]

Among other plagiarisms idly charged against that gifted poet Lord Byron, is the incident of the White-bird, recorded in "*Don Juan*," hovering over a death-bed. Permit me to observe, that if his lordship is liable to censure on this account, so must the author from whom he is said to have derived it.

The White-bird, in presage of death, is a traditionary agent that superstition has made use of for centuries; and Lord Byron, in his boyish days, may have often heard of it, especially in the families of sea-faring people.

In Howell's Letters, you will perceive one, bearing date July 1, 1684, from which I have made the ensuing extract.

M. E.

"Near St. Dunstan's Church, Fleet Street, I stepped into a Stone Cutter's; and casting my eyes up and down, I spied a huge marble, with a large inscription upon it, which was thus:

1. "Here lies John Oxenham, a goodly young man, in whose chamber, as he was struggling with the pangs of death, a bird with a white breast, was seen fluttering about his bed, and so vanished!"

2. "Here lies also Mary Oxenham, sister of the above John, who died the next day, and the same apparition was in the room."

Another sister is spoken of then.

And the fourth inscription is as follows:

"Here lies, hard by, James Oxenham, son of the said John, who died a child in his cradle, a little after, and such a bird was seen fluttering about his head a little before he expired, which vanished afterwards."

The Hoopo.

[1777, p. 211.]

The vulgar in our country formerly esteemed it a forerunner of some calamity. Pennant, however, says it visits these islands fre-

quently ; but not at stated seasons. It is found in many parts of Europe, in Egypt, and even as remote as Ceylon. The Turks call it Tir Chaos, or the messenger-bird, from the resemblance its crest has to the plumes worn by the Chaous, or Turkish couriers.

Ovid says that Tereus was changed into this bird :

" Vertitur in volucrem, cui stant in vertice cristæ,
Prominet immodicum pro longâ cuspide rostrum ;
Nomen Epops volucris."

(*Metam.*, lib. vi., l. 672.)

" Tereus, thro' grief, and haste to be revenged,
Shares the like fate, and to a bird is changed,
Fix'd on his head the crested plumes appear,
Long is his beak, and sharpen'd as a spear."

On Vulgar Errors in Natural History.

[1771, pp. 251, 252.]

As arts and sciences make very perceptible advances in Europe after every ten years, an Encyclopædia or magazine, wherein to register our new stores, becomes, of necessity, a periodical publication. But as these dictionaries contain not only what is new, but generally a system of all that is known, both new and old, upon every article, they are too bulky and expensive for common use. Perhaps a more eligible method to treasure our acquisitions, and to mark the ground we have gained, would be to republish from time to time a book of vulgar errors, as fast as new lights and better knowledge concurred to remove our old prejudices. Having long entertained this thought, my expectations were very greatly raised upon seeing an advertisement not a great while since, promising a book of vulgar errors, by a Fellow of one of the colleges in Cambridge most celebrated for good philosophers and naturalists. I cannot say, however, that I found my knowledge very much advanced by this collection ; and tho' every attempt to increase the fund of science deserves the acknowledgment of its votaries, yet I suppose every gentleman of reading will allow that a more scientific choice of articles might have been made than this of Mr. Fevargues. A collection of vulgar errors is not a collection of the errors of the vulgar, that would indeed be a large book, but of the errors of the common rate of philosophers and men of science. Such is that of Sir Thomas Brown, in which you will not find many errors of the common people, except that body was much more learned than it is at present. Of all the books recommended to our youth, after their academical studies, I do not know a better than this of Sir Thomas's to excite their curiosity, to put them upon thinking and enquiring, and to guard them against taking anything upon trust from opinion or authority. His language has, indeed, a little air of affectation, which is apt to disgust young persons ; and it would be doing

a very great service to that class if any gentleman of learning would take the pains to smooth and adapt it a little more to modern ears.

It is near a century and a half since this book, which was the first of the kind that in any degree answered its title, was published. Since that age I know of no other but that above mentioned of the gentleman of S. John's. Yet, as the growth of science has been so rich and fertile in the last century and this, I have no doubt but the *list of errors removed* would make a much larger book than even Sir T. Brown's. Out of more than three hundred I find minuted by myself, here follow a few in one part of Natural History only.

1. That the Scorpion does not sting itself when surrounded by fire, and that its sting is not even venomous.—Keyser's "Travels," Maupertius, Hughes' "Barbadoes," Hamilton's Letter in the "Philosophical Transactions."

2. That the Tarantula is not poisonous, and that music has no particular effect on persons bitten by it, more than on those stung by a wasp.—De la Lande's "Travels," Naples, Abbé Richard's ditto, Experiments of the Prince of San Severo. [See Note 38.]

3. That the Lizard is not friendly to man in particular, much less does it awaken him on the approach of a serpent.—Hughes' "Barbadoes," Brook's "Natural History."

4. That the Remora has no such power as to retard the sailing of a ship, by sticking itself to its bottom.—De la Lande, *alii passim*.

5. That the stroke of the Cramp Fish is not occasioned by a muscle.—Bancroft's "Guiana, concerning the torporific eel."

6. That the Salamander does not live in fire, nor is it capable of bearing more heat than other animals. Sir T. Brown suspected it, Keyser has clearly proved it.

7. That the bite of the Spider is not venomous.—Reaumur. That it is found in Ireland too plentifully. That it has no dislike to fixing its web on Irish oak. That it has no antipathy to the toad.—Barrington's Letter, "Philosophical Transactions," and Swammerdam.

8. It is an error to suppose that a fly has only a microscopic eye. Dragon-flies, bees, wasps, flesh-flies, etc., will turn off and avoid an object in their way, on the swiftest wing, which shows a very quick and commanding sight. It is probable that the sight of all animals is in quickness and extent proportioned to their speed.

9. The Porcupine does not shoot out his quills for annoying his enemy: he only sheds them annually, as other feathered animals do. He has a muscular skin, and can shake the loose ones off at the time of molting.—Hughes, and *alii passim*.

10. The Jackall, commonly called the Lion's Provider, has no connection at all with the Lion. He is a sort of fox, and is hunted in the East as the fox is with us.—Shaw, Sandys.

11. The fable of the Fox and Grapes is taught us from our childhood, without our ever reflecting that the foxes we are acquainted

with do not eat grapes. This fable came from the East; the fox of Palestine is a great destroyer of grapes.—J. Hasselquist, Shaw.

12. The eye of birds is not more agile than that of other animals, though their sight is more quick. On the contrary, their eye is quite immovable, as is that of most animals and insects of the quickest sight.—British Zoology, etc.

13. The Tyger, instead of being the swiftest of beasts, is a remarkably sluggish and slow animal.—Owen's Dictionary, *in verbo*. Experiment at Windsor Lodge.

14. Sir Thomas Brown, who wrote against Vulgar Errors, maintains that apes and elephants may be taught to speak.

I am afraid of trespassing farther on your paper at this time. At some future opportunity I will convey to you a much larger list, under the heads of quadrupeds, birds, fishes, insects, vegetables and minerals. This common division seems more commodious than that of Sir Thomas, who has given a miscellany of errors in natural history, arts, civil history, religious traditions, paintings, etc. Natural History alone would furnish a considerable volume if we add to the heads we have just mentioned, the errors as to the elements, the air and the meteors, the earth, the waters, the heavens. Civil History is a very large field also. A French author has lately given us a collection of various articles of Ancient History, which pass current; yet are many of them demonstrably false. His work has some trifling articles.

H.

Cuckoo Rhyme.

[1796, *Part I.*, p. 117.]

You may assure Mr. Dickinson, p. 4, the notion of the Cuckoo, *in part*, subsisting by sucking the eggs of other birds, does universally prevail; and, though it is not noticed by authors of notoriety, there is a humble production, entituled "Songs for Children," which has inculcated it for many years, if not for many generations, in the following stanzas:

"The cuckoo's a pretty bird,
Sings as she flies;
She brings us good tidings,
And tells us no lies:
She sucks little birds' eggs
To make her sing clear,
And never cries cuckoo
Till summer draws near."

From my own observation, I can inform him that she frequently despoils the nest of some smaller birds of their eggs (and that most probably by sucking them, as the remains of the broken empty shells are generally found in them), and then deposits one, and sometimes, though but seldom, two, of her own; where she leaves them to be

hatched by a foster-mother ; this fact is also proved by your succeeding correspondent *Clericus Eboracensis* ; but whether this is the universal method of increasing her species, I am not competent to determine : though I have never heard of her eggs, nor nestlings, being found in any other situation. [See Note 39.]

Hz. SNEZOE.

[1796, *Part I.*, p. 465.]

Pigeons' Feathers.

Superstition has done much mischief in the world in the days of our forefathers ; and perhaps, in some instances, their children of the present day are not quite exempted from its influence. May I be permitted to select the following as a specimen ? It is common to throw away the feathers of pigeons, as unfit to be used for beds ; and the only reason assigned for this is that persons cannot die easily on beds which contain any such feathers. [See *ante*, p. 210.]

Will any of your correspondents be so kind as to inform us whether pigeon-feathers are unfit in their own nature for beds ? or whence the opinion with respect to dying persons took its origin ?

ERASTUS.

A Provincial Dislike to Game—how to be accounted for.

[1787, *Part II.*, p. 861.]

If you ask a countryman in the South-west part of the kingdom to dine, he objects to any kind of game which comes to your table, and says, in his provincial dialect, *I never eats hollow fowl* ; under which term he includes hares and rabbits, as well as wild fowl, and every kind of poultry. It is in vain to enquire whence this dislike proceeds, for he can tell you no more, than that he derives it from his father. Cæsar, it is very remarkable, describes the inhabitants of this country as having exactly the same prejudice. "They esteemed it," says he, "a crime to eat hares, poultry, or geese : they kept them nevertheless for amusement." "*Leporem et gallinam et anserem gustare fas non putant ; hæc tamen alunt, animi voluptatisque causa.*"—*De Bell. Gall.*, lib. v. c. 12. Had the generality of our people been descendants of the Britons whom Cæsar encountered, there would have been then little difficulty in accounting for this superstition, as it might reasonably be supposed to be the remains of a Druidical inhibition continued to this time. But history allows of no such solution ; for the Saxons found the southern end of our island, deserted by the Romans and ravaged by the Picts, in such a state of desolation, that, so far from adopting the customs of the few surviving natives, they gave new names to the rivers and mountains, and even to the villages and cities. Now we have the authority of Cæsar for asserting

that the Germans, from whom our Saxon ancestors are descended, had no connection with the Druids, but that they had religious rites and ceremonies of their own.* Whether this injunction might have been part of the religion of the Germans, as Tacitus is silent on the subject, cannot now, I think, be ascertained. But what could induce the legislators of two distinct nations to forbid a food so obvious, delicate, and wholesome? And yet it is not easy to imagine that the Saxons would, after their arrival here, impose such an unmeaning restraint on themselves.

There is, however, an abstinence from some of these animals as to food still more inexplicable. It is well-known to sportsmen, that spaniels refuse to eat the bones of pheasants, partridges, and wild fowl, though they hunt them naturally; they reject also the bones of the woodcock, which bird they must be trained to flush. Is this antipathy dictated by instinct, or does it arise from being domesticated?

Yours, etc., T. H. W.

Hedgehog.

[1779, pp. 350, 351.]

It appears to me that a cruel practice has too long subsisted with regard to a very harmless part of the animal creation, whose wrongs cry out aloud for redress.

The poor persecuted creature to which I allude is the hedgehog, or urchin; concerning whom (fatally for him) an opinion prevails, which I more than suspect to be altogether groundless, viz., that this little animal has both the inclination and the power to milk the cow. On this suspicion the supposed offender is doomed to suffer death, which, too, is frequently inflicted with circumstances of great cruelty; and to render his chance of escaping the farmer's vengeance the less, a notion has been propagated through all parts of the kingdom that the law hath set a price on the head of this creature, which the churchwardens of every parish wherein the hedgehog is found are obliged to pay to whoever brings to them the poor devoted animal alive.

Now, Mr. Urban, I am informed that no such law exists in this country; and that, consequently, the churchwardens are not obliged to encourage this blind persecution of an helpless, innocent being, who, perhaps, possesses no one quality hurtful to mankind. But, as I am still in doubt in regard to the matter of law, I should take it as a great favour if any of your readers and correspondents, who are conversant with the statutes, will (if there be such a law) have the goodness to point it out, by a line in your very useful magazine. I

* "Germani multum ab hac consuetudine (Gallorum) differunt. Nam neque Druides habent, qui rebus divinis præsint; neque sacrificiis student."—*De Bell Gall.*, lib. vi. c. 21.

likewise much wish to know whether the felonious use of sucking the cows has ever been proved upon the hedgehog.

A COUNTRY CHURCHWARDEN.

[1779, *p.* 395.]

A country churchwarden wants to be informed whether the law hath set a price on the head of a hedgehog, and whether it hath inclination and the power to milk the cow.

As to the first part of this enquiry, your correspondent may rest assured that no such law is now in being, or ever did exist; for to what purpose should mankind be roused to persecute, even with circumstances of barbarity, a poor, harmless, inoffensive creature, slow and patient, incapable to offend, or to do the least injury to any part of the animal creation, except devouring worms, snails, and other such creatures, on which it feeds, together with the berries of hawthorns and brambles, and other wild berries? Perhaps the appearance it makes may have disgusted some unthinking people, being guarded by nature against all common dangers by prickles and a power of rolling itself round in them when apprehensive of an enemy by means of a strong membrane or muscle, something like a football.

As to the power and inclination of milking a cow, I may venture to say that such a notion is one of the most absurd and silliest of all vulgar errors. Had Providence intended the hedgehog should have been vested with such a power, it would have been properly enabled to have carried that power into execution, by endowing it with a mouth large enough to receive the pap of the cow, and without giving any uneasiness to the cow during the operation of sucking; but, instead thereof, the head of the hedgehog terminates in a snout like that of a common hog, the mouth is small, armed with sharp and short teeth, utterly improper for suction, and which must destroy the very supposal of such a power; and from thence we may safely conclude the hedgehog cannot have any inclination to milk a cow. The hedgehog lives in the bottom of hedges and among furze on whins; it collects moss, dry leaves, and grass wherewith to make a warm bed. I remember formerly that a wasted hedgehog and fried mice were reckoned good in the chin-cough, or hooping-cough.

S. L.

Horse-shoes nailed on Ships.

[1822, *Part II.*, *p.* 482.]

A correspondent asks if any of our nautical readers can furnish a plausible reason for the prevailing custom of fixing a horse-shoe on the foremasts of ships in his Majesty's service, and whether it is a common practice in other vessels, as it has been often seen in the ships of war in the royal dockyards.

Ipswich, Jan. 7.

[1823, *Part I.*, pp. 16, 17.]

In reply to a question in your December Magazine, p. 482, allow me to state that it is usual to nail a horseshoe on the foremast of vessels in the merchant service, and the shoe must be found by accident, or it is believed to have no virtue. The reason assigned for doing it is, that it keeps witches and wizards from hindering the voyage or damaging the ship. Sailors are many of them very superstitious, and have a firm belief in its efficacy. They have also their lucky and unlucky days. Sunday is the most fortunate: whatever voyage is begun on that day is sure to be prosperous. Friday is the most unfortunate, as a voyage begun then is sure to be an unfortunate one.

If your correspondent is accustomed to be amongst sailors on the water, he has most probably observed them in calm weather whistling the wind, to induce it to blow—and many of them believe it to be a very powerful charm. We smile at the poor Laplander, who bags his wind, ready tied up, for him to use at his pleasure, whilst our own people are almost as credulous.

Some stable-keepers in this neighbourhood hang up a flint stone, with a natural hole through it, in the stable, to prevent the Devil riding the horses in the night, which they tell you he will do if the stone does not hang there.

GEO. BAYLEY.

[1823, *Part II.*, p. 412.]

Upon turning over the leaves of your last two volumes this morning, a few observations occurred to me, which I subjoin for insertion.

THE DRUID IN LONDON.

The custom of nailing horseshoes on the masts of ships, lintels or thresholds of doors, etc., is very antient, and originated in a superstitious belief that no witch can injure the inmates of a house or vessel so protected. Aubrey, in his "Miscellanies," says: "It is a thing very common to nail horseshoes on the thresholds of doors, which is to hinder the power of witches that enter into the house. Most houses of the west-end of London have the horse-shoe on the threshold. *It should be a horse-shoe that one finds.*" Again, in Gay's fable of the "Old Woman and her Cats," the supposed witch says:

"Straws laid across my pace retard,
The horse-shoes nail'd each threshold guard."

Country wenches, when they experience any peculiar difficulty in making butter, will sometimes drop into the churn a horse-shoe heated, believing the cream to be spell-bound, and that this operation will destroy the charm. I have read in "Glanville," or some such

work, of this experiment being once tried by a weary churning, when immediately an old hag, a reputed witch, who lived close by, shrieked violently, and exclaimed that she was scorched. Upon examining her body, the mark of a horse-shoe was found distinctly branded on her flesh!!! Passing under the arcade of the Royal Exchange a day or two since, I observed a horse-shoe nailed to one of the benches belonging to the ticket-porters, so that the superstition it seems is not yet extinct even in London.



Witchcraft.



WITCHCRAFT.

On the Rise and Progress of Witchcraft.

[1829, *Part II.*, pp. 404-408.]

"Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live."—Ex. xxii. 18.

I HAVE been impressed with an idea that it would be neither uninteresting nor unprofitable to collect from our ancient annals and historical resources some particulars relating to the existence and disappearance of witches. But be it known to those members of our fair sisterhood who have descended into the vale of years, that I have a tale for you, which, if ye have no "young blood" to "freeze," will make

"Each knotty and combined lock to part,
And each particular hair to stand on end."

Before commencing our history of this singular craft, it may be expedient to give a definition of "witchery," and a description of what it has been generally understood to signify. In the first place, it should be carefully distinguished from several other equally surprising arts, which, though like witchcraft they were performed thro' the medium of supernatural assistance, were dissimilar from it in many essential particulars.

"Sorcery" was an art which was supposed to be practised by a compact with an evil spirit, and was a power supposed to be possessed of commanding the infernal spirits by skill in charms and invocations, and of having influence over them by the help of fumigations, so that whilst the witch attained her ends by application to the devil, that evil spirit was under constraint to obey the sorcerer; and it is remarkable that some foundation is to be found for this in the "Book of Tobit," ver. 7, where it is said, that touching the heart and liver of the fish, if a devil or evil spirit trouble any, we must make a smoke thereof before the man or the woman, and the party shall be no more vexed, and the devil shall smell it and flee away, and never come again any more. And there is a passage also in Josephus which states, that

one Eleazer, before Vespasian and a great number of persons, freed several who were possessed with evil spirits from the power of them, by putting to their nose a certain ring, having a specific root under it, which quickly expelled the demon out of their bodies, so as never to return again.

"Magic," in its ancient sense, merely signified the science or doctrine of the Magi, the wise men of Persia and other eastern countries, and who in the days of Zoroaster, the founder of them, and some time afterwards, were the most skilful mathematicians and philosophers of the ages in which they lived. Magic originally consisted in the study of wisdom. Afterwards the Magi applied their minds to the study of astrology, divination, and sorcery; consequently in time the term "magic" assumed an odious character, and was used to signify a diabolical kind of science, depending on the assistance of the infernal host and the souls of the departed.

"Augury" was an art much regarded among the ancient Greeks and Romans, and of very early origin. The "*Iliad*" and "*Odyssey*" abound with relations of prodigies appearing in the skies, which are expounded by the augurs to the ruin or advantage of the ancient Greeks, as in the following description :

"With that two eagles from a mountain's height
By Jove's command direct their rapid flight;
Swift they descend with wing to wing conjoin'd,
Stretch their broad plumes, and float upon the wind;
Above the assembled peers they wheel on high,
And clang their wings, and hovering beat the sky;
With ardent eyes the rival train they threat,
And, shrieking loud, denounce approaching fate;
They cuff, they tear, their cheeks and necks they rend,
And from their plumes huge drops of blood descend:
Then, sailing o'er the domes and towers, they fly
Full toward the east, and mount into the sky.
The wondering rivals gaze with care oppress,
And chilling horrors freeze in every breast,
Till big with knowledge of approaching woes,
The prince of augurs Halitherses rose;
Prescient he view'd the aerial tracks, and drew
A sure presage from every wing that flew."

(*Odyssey*, book ii.)

The better opinion seems to be, that the origin of "augury" is to be traced to the migration of birds, by which husbandry in many ancient states was regulated. The circumstance of birds disappearing, and then re-appearing at stated periods, must doubtless, when it first came to be noticed, have excited much astonishment and curious speculation as to their abode; hence the first observers might have imagined that they had approached the ethereal regions, and having visited the abode of the gods, be enabled to tell future events. In process of time these occasional visitants gained a high authority, and

subsequently no affair of consequence was undertaken without consulting them. They were considered as the interpreters of the gods, and in the Greek and Roman States officers were appointed to augur of future events, which they did by the chattering or flight of birds; and these were so much respected, that they were never deposed, nor any substituted in their place, though they should have been convicted of the most heinous crimes.

The term "witchcraft," like "magic," originally signified wit or wisdom. It has been derived by us from our Saxon forefathers.* A witch may concisely be said to be one that had the knowledge or skill of doing or telling things in an extraordinary way; and that in virtue of either an express or implicit association or confederacy with some evil spirit. The witch occasioned, but was not the principal efficient. She seemed to do the work, but the spirit performed the wonder; sometimes immediately, as in transportations and possessions; sometimes by applying other natural causes, as in raising storms and inflicting diseases.

To attempt, at this late and enlightened period, to encourage a belief in the existence of witchcraft, would in all probability subject the writer to be regarded as a sad instance of ignorant and superstitious credulity; and doubtless the number who now entertain such a notion is extremely limited, and which may reasonably be expected to decrease as time and improvement advance. That such an art exists at present, in this country, I can hardly think to be likely; but that it once did exist, and that it was practised in this and other countries until within the last 150 years, I have not the slightest hesitation whatever in firmly believing. As time advances, the facts and relations will be proportionably less known, and to this I mainly attribute the disbelief which at present exists; but I am apprehensive that a minute investigation of the extraordinary relations and trials which are to be met with in our antient annals, must shake the most stubborn disbeliever. This has been precisely the effect produced on the mind of the writer in the course of this investigation, and in order that some information may be possessed respecting the existence of this singular art, before it is wholly lost sight of, I design to give the result of a considerable research upon the subject, in this and a series of papers.

Our ancestors, even up to the commencement of the eighteenth century, were strong believers in the existence of witchcraft; and it

[* Skeat says it is from M.E., *wicche*; A.S., *wicca* (masc.), a wizard, and *wicce* (fem.). *Wicca* is a corruption of A.S. *witga*, a common abbreviated form of *witiga* or *witega*, a prophet, soothsayer, wizard. The corruption from *witga* to *wicca* is not difficult; but we could not be sure of it were it not for the cognate Icelandic form, which is the real clue to the word. This is Icel. *vitki*, a wizard; whence *vitka*, verb, to bewitch. This Icel. *vitki*, a wizard, is plainly from *vita*, to know; just as A.S. *witga* is from *witan*, to see, allied to *witan*, to know.]

is not surprising that they were so, for it is a fact that our antient law-books are full of decisions and trials upon the subject. All histories refer to the exploits of those instruments of darkness; and the testimonies of all ages, not merely of the rude and barbarous, but of the most civilized and polished, give accounts of these strange performances. We have the attestation of thousands of eye and ear witnesses, and those not of the easily deceived vulgar only, but of wise and grave discerners, and that when, as it would seem, no interest could oblige them to agree together in a common lie. Standing public records have been kept of well attested relations. Laws in most nations have been enacted against practices in witchcraft; those among the Jews, and our own, are notorious. Cases have been determined by judges who, as regards other legal matters, are revered, and their names handed down to us as legal oracles and sages, and to all appearance, upon the clearest and most decisive evidence; and thousands in our own nation, as well as others, have suffered death for their vile compacts.

In tracing the origin of witchcraft, we find a very early mention of it made in Scripture. Exodus xxii. 18, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." Upon this it may be sufficient to remark, that this must evidently signify one who has dealings with a familiar spirit; for it would indeed have been a severe law to put to death a poor conjuror, or *hocus pocus*, for exhibiting his tricks of legerdemain. Again, Leviticus xix. 31, "Regard not them that have familiar spirits, nor seek after wizards to be defiled by them." And Deut. xviii. 10, 11, "There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer." This accumulation of names is a plain indication that the Hebrew witch was one that practised by compact with evil spirits. According to the learned Bishop Patrick, the terms "witch," "wizard," and "familiar spirit," occurring here and in other parts of Scripture, are translated from the Hebrew word "Obor Oboth;" and he has collected together, with considerable industry, the opinions of the earliest Jewish writers as to their real signification. They think it probable that Oboth, in these places, signifies the same as the *dæmon* or spirit of the Greeks speaking out of the belly or chest, with a hollow voice, as if it came out of a bottle. So that the woman whom Saul went to consult is called "Baalath ob," a mistress of such a spirit, where it is plain "Ob" signifies the spirit or *dæmon*, and she that had familiarity with such a spirit, was properly called "Baal," or "Baalath ob," the master or mistress who had possessed it, and gave answers by it with a voice that seemed to come out of the lower parts of the belly. In Isa. xix. 3, according to Bishop Patrick, the Septuagint translates it, "They speak out of the earth, because the voice coming from the lower parts

of her that was possessed, seemed to come out of the earth," which was the opinion of the learned Selden also. R. Levi Barcelonita saith, the manner of it was thus: (Precept 258) After certain fumes and other ceremonies, a voice seemed to come from under the arm-holes, so he takes it; and so it is said in "Sanhedrim," c. 7, n. 7, of the person that had the familiar spirit, which answered to the questions which were asked. For this he quotes Sphira. But if it came from under the arm-holes, still it was so low and hollow, as if it had been out of the belly or the cavities of the earth. Others imagine that such persons had the name of Oboth, because they were swollen with the spirit, as a bladder is when blown. The famous Pythia, who delivered the oracles of Apollo according to Origen, sat over a hole, and received the spirit which swelled her, and made her utter oracles. Aug. Eugabius affirms, that he himself had seen such women called "Ventriloque," from whom, as they sat, a voice came out from their lower parts, and gave answers to inquiries. And Coelius Rhodoginus, lib. viii. "Antiq. Lect.," cap. 10, says, that he not only saw such a woman, and heard a very small voice coming out of her belly, but innumerable other people, through all Italy, among whom there were many great persons (who had her stripped naked that they might be sure there was no fraud), to whom a voice answered unto such things as they inquired. Hieron. Oleaster also, upon Isa. xxiv. 4, says, he saw such an one at Lisbon, from under whose arm-holes, and other parts of her, a small voice was heard, which readily answered to whatever was asked. And according to Whitby on Acts xvi. 16, the damsel possessed with a spirit of divination delivered her answers with a low voice, as out of her belly, and was then styled "Ventriloque." Hence, says he, these diviners are by the Septuagint not only styled speakers out of the belly, Lev. xix. 31, xx. 6; Deut. xviii. 11; 1 Sam. xxviii. 3, 7, 8, 9; 1 Chron. x. 13; 2 Chron. xxxiii. 6; Isa. viii. 19; but also said to speak out of the ground, Isa. xix. 3.

The most decided proof to be met with in sacred writ, of a confederacy between those who are there denominated "witches," and the powers of darkness, is the narrative respecting Saul and the Witch of Endor, in 1 Sam. xxviii. 5 to 19.*

This has ever been a sad stumbling-block in the way of those who have endeavoured to get rid of the idea of the existence of witchcraft, and particularly of Scot and Webster. They very industriously collected all the information they could acquire relative to the subject, and have taken great pains to refute, if possible, its reality. Scot's book was, by order of King James I., burnt by the hangman. On the other hand, Glanville, who was a celebrated ecclesiastic in the time of Charles II., and who appears from his writings to have been a pious man, in his "Philosophical Considerations of Witchcraft," refutes their

* See the account which Josephus gives of this memorable transaction, in Lib. vi. c. 14, "Antiquities of the Jews."

arguments with great perspicuity, and by the production of a body of evidence; and, according to a celebrated writer unfavourable to the notion of witchcraft, has certainly the superiority over his antagonists.

According to Arnold's commentary upon this book, the opinion that it was really Saul is very ancient, and seems to have been the persuasion of the Jewish Church long before the coming of Christ. Not only the writer of this book, but the Greek translators of the Old Testament, who lived long after that time, were in the same persuasion, as appears by a note which they inserted, 1 Chron. x. 13, where it is said that the Septuagint read very expressly that Samuel the Prophet gave the answer to King Saul when he enquired of the sorceress, which however is omitted in our version.

Justin Martyr also, who lived not long after the time of the Apostles, in his dialogue with Trypho, advances as an argument for the soul surviving in another state, that the witch called up the soul of Samuel at the request of Saul.

The appearance of the shades of the departed seems to have been a familiar idea of the ancient tragic poets. It were needless to refer to the interviews between the heroes of Homer and Virgil and the shades of the dead. *Æschylus*, in his tragedy of "Persoe," calls up the shade of Darius in a manner very similar to this of Samuel, who foretells Queen Atossa all her misfortunes. Among other proofs which might be produced from Scripture, we might refer to the circumstance of evil angels having been sent among the Egyptians, *Psa.* lxxviii. v. 49, "and those passed through and smote the land, but the destroyers, viz., the evil angels, were not permitted to come into the Israelite's house," *Ex.* xii. 23. When God asked Satan whence he came, *Job* i. 7, he answered, "from going to and fro in the earth." The writings of the great Apostle also furnish a proof, if further evidence were wanting from Scripture, of individuals practising similar arts, through the medium of commerce with evil spirits; and they besides show that, after a progress of 4,000 years in the course of time, this diabolical art continued in existence, *Acts* xxi. 16, "And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel, possessed with a spirit of divination, met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying." Paul, it is said, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, "I command thee to come out of her;" and he came out the same hour, which signifies plainly that an evil spirit, or spirit of divination, was in her. It is said that she brought her masters much gain by soothsaying; that the evil spirit was actually expelled from her; and that, upon such expulsion, her reputation as an oracle or soothsayer was at an end; for "her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone."

[1829, *Part II.*, pp. 512-516.]

"There sawe I playing Jogelours,
Magicians and Tragetours,
And Phetonissis, Charmerissis,
And olde Witchis and Sorcerissis,
That usen Exorsisacions
And eke subfumigacions,
And Clerkis eke, chicke connin well
All this Magike hight naturell,
That craftily doe ther ententes
To maken in certain ascendentis
Imagis lo! through which Magike,
To maken a man ben whole or sike."

CHAUCER: 3 *Book of Fame*

Having already at some length considered the evidence furnished in the Scriptures to substantiate the fact of an intercourse having subsisted between infernal spirits and those who were possessed, I proceed to trace its progress onwards; but with the exception of our own country, there is scarcely anything to be met with in the records of other nations in the shape of relations. Little is to be found in foreign histories on the subject of witchcraft, beyond a mere occasional reference to the crime, and the existence of laws which recognised it, and awarded punishments against the commission of it. The Romans had a law as old as the 12 tables against witchcraft: "Apud nos in duodecim Tabulis cavetur, ne quis alienos fructus excantassit." Seneca, l. 4, c. 7, mentions a similar law amongst the Athenians. Plato also, in his 11th "Book of Laws," pp. 932, 933, orders punishments not only for those who destroyed others by potions, but for those who pretended to be able to revenge themselves on others, either by certain enchantments or by charms. And therefore he would have even such people who used these sorts of witchcraft to be put to death if they were possessors of any sort of knowledge, but if they were simple people, he leaves the judges to punish them as they found reason. [See note 40.]

Montesquieu, it seems, was a believer in the existence of witchcraft, and has appropriated a chapter in his "Spirit of Laws" to the consideration of the crime. He says that the Emperor Theodorus Lascarus attributed his illness to witchcraft. Those who were accused of this crime had no other resource left than to handle a red-hot iron without being burnt. Thus, among the Greeks, a person ought to have been a sorcerer to be able to clear himself of the suspicion of witchcraft.

If, however, the historian has not dwelt much upon the subject, it seems to have afforded ample scope for the exercise of fiction, and the loftiest imagination and genius of the poet, both in antient and modern times. Many fine selections could be given from the poems

of the sublimest bards. The following description of a witch by Spenser is a beautiful sketch :

“There in a gloomy hollow glen she found
A little cottage built of sticks and reedes,
In homely wise and wald with sod, around ;
In which a Witch did dwell, in loathly weedes
And wilful want, all careless of her needes :
So choosing solitarie to abide
Far from all neighbours, that her devilish deedes
And hellish arts from people she might hide,
And hurt far off unknowne whom ever she envide.”

Faerie Queene.

The history of our own country is the principal source from whence to gain the most authentic records of the particular manner in which the art of witchcraft was practised, but few of these are to be met with previous to the period when printing was invented. After that time our annals are full of them. The writer has occupied much time in referring to as many of these as possible, but the number is so great that much embarrassment arises in selecting those which are the most remarkable, and attested by evidence. An abridgment of these, selected from a great variety of old materials, will be given as nearly as possible in order of date.

Witchcraft was severely punished before the Conquest. By the laws of our Saxon ancestors, it was sometimes punished by exile, but more generally by burning ; and frequent mention of it is to be found in the laws of Alfred, Athelstan, and Canute. “Inter leges Alveredi,” folio 23 ; 11 Ethelstani, c. 6 ; Canute 4, 5. And numbers were punished after the Conquest. No mention of witchcraft certainly is to be found in the laws of William the Conqueror, but the offence seems to have been fully recognised by the old common law. In the “Mirror,” c. 1, it is said, “Que sorcery et devinal sont members de heresie.” And Britton also, “Sorcerers, Sorcesses, etc., et miscreants, soient arses.” And thus in conformity with the old Saxon laws, there is a report of a case in an antient register, that in October, anno 20 Hen. VI., Margery Gurdeman of Eye, in the county of Suffolk, was, for witchcraft and consultation with the devil, after sentence and a relapse, burnt. [See note 41.]

In 1430 Joan of Arc, better known in history under the designation of the Maid of Orleans, displayed her enterprising and extraordinary prowess. The unhappy maid attributed the impulses which she felt to the influences of heaven ; but upon her downfall, those who had before regarded her as a saint considered her to be a sorceress, forsaken by the dæmon who had granted her a fallacious and temporary assistance. Southey has immortalized her name in his beautiful poem, intituled, “Joan of Arc,” in which the arch-priest is made to address her :

"Woman, if any fiend of hell
Lurk in thy bosom so to prompt the vaunt
Of inspiration, and to mock the power
Of God and holy Church, thus by the virtue
Of water, hallowed in the name of God,
That damned spirit adjure I to depart
From his possessed prey."

The issue of her glories and her misfortunes terminated in her being tried and found guilty of sorcery and witchcraft, for which she was sentenced to be burned alive, which was ultimately executed with brutal severity in the market-place of Rouen.

In the reign of Henry VIII. flourished the celebrated Mother Shipton, whose fame spread through the whole kingdom, and multitudes of all ranks resorted to her for the removal of their doubts, and the knowledge of future events, which she explained to them in several mystical prophecies or oracles, particularly Cardinal Wolsey's downfall, the following prediction of which may be worth preserving :

"When the lower shrubs do fall,
The great trees quickly follow shall,
The mitred Peacock's lofty pride
Shall to his Master be a guide,
And one great Court to pass shall bring,
What was ne'er done by any King.
The poor shall grieve to see that day,
And who did feast must fast and pray,
Fate so decreed their overthrow,
Riches brought pride, and pride brought woe."

In a sermon preached before Queen Elizabeth, in 1584, by Bishop Jewell, I find the following passage: "It may please your Grace to understand that witches and sorcerers within these last four years are marvellously increased within your Grace's realm. Your Grace's subjects pine away even unto death, their colour fadeth, their flesh rotteth, their speech is benumbed, their senses are bereft. I pray God they never practise further than upon the subject."

In the Lambeth Library is the "Examination and Confession of certain Wytches at Chensford, Essex, before the Queen's Majesty's Judges, the 26 day of July, 1566, at the Assizes holden there, and one of them put to death for the same offence as their Examination declareth more at large. Mother Fraunces learnt her art of her grandmother Eve, of Hatfield Peverel, and trained a whyte spotted Cat with her own blood to be her sathan; and Mother Waterhouse was hanged on her own confession of execrable sorcery, by her practised 15 years. The apprehension and confession of three notorious Witches, arreigned, and by justice condemned and executed at Chelmsforde, in the County of Essex, the 5 day of Julye last past, with the manner of their devilish practices, and keeping of their spirits, whose fourmes

are herein truly pourtraied. Imprinted in London by Wylliam Powell, for Wyllame Pickeringe, dwelling at St. Magnus's Corner, and are there for to be sould, anno 1566."

Sir Henry Cromwell, Lord of the Manor of Warboys, gave to the Corporation of Huntingdon £40, the property of three witches of Warboys, arraigned, convicted, and executed at Huntingdon in 1593, for bewitching the five daughters of Robert Throckmorton, Esq., and divers other persons, with sundrie devilish and grievous torments, and also for the bewitching to death of the Lady Cromwell; and this gift was presented on the condition that the Corporation should allow 40 shillings every year to a Doctor or Bachelor in Divinity, in Queen's College, Cambridge, for preaching a Sermon at All Saints Church in Huntingdon, on the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin, against the sin of witchcraft, and to teach the people how they should discover and frustrate the machinations of witches, and dealers with evil spirits. It appears that this annual service still continues; but the sin of witchcraft has long ceased to be the theme of these discourses, and the subject is now only mentioned to explode and deprecate the lamentable effects of such miserable delusions.

King James I. entertained a confident belief in the reality of witchcraft; but not, as it is said, until he advanced considerably in life, when he enacted the Statutes against Witchcraft and Sorcery, and wrote several works upon the subject, particularly his "*Dæmonologie*." It appears, however, that in the earlier period of his life he considered the existence of witches to be an illusion, which opinion was considerably shaken, it is said, by the following confession of a suspected witch, who was examined before him in Scotland, and which is taken from the records in Scotland, and preserved in the Scottish dialect:

"Item, Fyled and convict for sameckle as she confessed before his Majesty, that the devil in man's likeness met her going out in the fields from her own house, between 5 and 6 at even, being alone, and commandit her to be at Northbervick Kirk by the next night, and she past there on horseback, conveyed by her good son called John Cooper, and lighted at the kirk-yard, or a little before she came to it, about 11 hours at even. They danced along the kirk-yard, Gailie Duncan plaid to them on a trump; John Fein, muffled, led all the rest; the said Agnes and her daughter followed next. Besides, there were Kate Gray, George Mailes's wife, Rob. Grierson, Katherine Duncan Buchanan, Thos. Barnhill and his wife, Gilbert Macgill, Job Macgill, Katherine Macgill, with the rest of their complices, above an hundred persons, whercof there were 6 men, and all the rest women. The women made first their homage, and then the men. The men were turned 9 times wildershins about, and the women 6 times. John Fenn blew up the doors, and blew in the lights, which were like mickle black candles striking round about the pulpit. The

Devil startit up himself in the pulpit, like a mickle black man, and every one answered here. Mr. Rob. Grierson being named, they all ran hirdie girdie, and were angry, for it was promised he should be called Robert the Comptroller, alias Robert the Rower, for expriming of his name. The first thing he commandit was, as they kept all promise, and been good servants, and what they had done since the last time they had convened. At his command they opened up 3 graves, 2 within and one without the kirk, and took off the joints of their fingers, toes, and nose, and parted them amongst them. And the said Agnes Sympson got for her part a winding-sheet and 2 joynts. The Devil commandit them to keep the joints upon them while they were dry, and then to make a powder of them, to do evil withal. Then he commandit them to keep his commandments, which were to do all the evil they could. He had on him one gown and one hat, which were both black; and they that were assembled, part stood and part sate. John Fien was nearest the Devil at his left Elbock. Graymaical kept the door."

About this time a conspiracy was set on foot to drown the King on his passage home from Denmark. There is a scarce pamphlet, intituled, "News from Scotland, declaring the damnable life and death of Dr. Fian, a notable Sorcerer, who was buried in Edinburgh 1591, and which Doctor was Register to the Devil, that sundrie times preached at North Barwicke Kirke to a number of notorious Witches, with the true examination of the said Doctor and Witches, as they uttered them in the presence of the Scot King, discovering how they pretended to bewitch and drown his Majesty in the sea, coming from Denmark, with such other wonderful matters as the like hath not been heard of at any time." The pamphlet contains a full narrative of the transactions of the Scottish crew, and thus at the conclusion accounts for the risking of the King's royal person in the society of such notorious witches: [See post, p. 295.]

"It is well-known that the King is the Child and Servant of God, and they but the Servants of the Devil. He is the Lord's anointed, and they but vessels of God's wrath. He is a true Christian, and trusteth in God; they worse than Infidels, for they only trust in the Devil, who daily serves them till he have brought them to utter destruction. But hereby it seemeth that his highness carried a magnanimous and undisturbed mind, not scared with their enchantments, but resolute in this, that so long as God is with him, he feareth not who is against him."

The occurrence of these transactions, it is said, made a strong impression upon the mind of the King, and in all probability led him to enact his famous Statute against Witchcraft, which was passed in the twelfth year of his reign. This statute he is said to have penned himself, and particularly specifies the several crimes, and awards the punishment for each. It is as follows:

"If any person or persons shall use, practise, or exercise any invocation or conjuration of any evil and wicked spirit, or shal consult, covenant with, entertaine, employ, feed, or reward, any evil or wicked spirit, to or for any intent or purpose ; Or take up any dead man, woman, or child, out of his, her, or their grave, or any other place where the dead body resteth, or the skin, bone, or any part of a dead person, to be employed or used in any manner of Witchcraft, Sorcery, Charm, or Inchantment ; or shall use, practise, or exercise any Witchcraft, Inchantment, Charm, or Sorcery, whereby any person shall be killed, disturbed, wasted, consumed, pierced or lamed in his or her body, or any part thereof ; that then every such offender or offenders therein, aiders, abettors, and counsellors, being of any of the said offences duly and lawfully convicted, shall suffer pains of death as a felon or felons, and shall lose the privilege and benefit of clergy, and sanctuary.

"If any person or persons take upon him or them, by Witchcraft, Inchantment, Charm, or Sorcery, to tell or declare in what place any treasure of gold or silver should or might be found or had in the earth, or other secret places, or where goods or things lost or stolen should be found, or to the intent to provoke any person to unlawful love ; or whereby any cattle or goods of any person shall be destroyed ; or to hurt or destroy any person in his or her body, although the same be not effected or done, being therefor lawfully convicted, shall for the said offence suffer death," etc.

The clause as to taking up a dead body to be employed in witchcraft, seems to be novel and singular enough ; but I find, in Sir Edward Coke, 3 Inst., a circumstance related, which in all probability gave rise to it. He says :

"A man was taken in Southwark, with a hand and face of a dead man, and with a book of Sorcery in his male [mail], and was brought into the King's Bench ; but seeing no indictment was against him, the Clerks did swear him that from thenceforth he should not be a Sorcerer, and was delivered out of prison ; and the head of the dead man, and the book of Sorcery, were burnt at Tothill, at the costs of the prisoner."

And Sir Edward remarks :

"So as the head and his book of Sorcery had the same punishment that the Sorcerer should have had by the antient law, if he had by his Sorcery prayed in aid of the devil."

In 1616 was published "A Treatise of Witchcraft, with a true narration of the Witchcrafts which Mary Smith, wife of Henry Smith, glover, did practise, of her contract vocally made between the Devil and her in solemne termes, by whose means she hurt sundry persons whom she envied, which is confirmed by her own Confession, and also from the publique records of the examination of diverse upon their oaths ; and lastly, of her death and execution for the same,

which was on the 12 day of Januarie last past. By Alex. Roberts, B.D., and preacher of God's word at King's Linne, in Norfolk, London, 1616." [See Hazlitt's *Collections and Notes*, 1876, p. 360.]

In the old Parish Register of Wells, in Norfolk, about the commencement of this century, in recording the death of thirteen individuals who had been drowned, it is thus stated :

"Misled uppe ye Weste Couste, coming from Spain, whose deaths were brought to pass by the detestable woorkinge of an execrable Witch of King's Lynn, whose name was Mother Gabley ; by the boyling, or rather labouring of certayne eggs in a payle full of colde water ; afterwards approved sufficiently at the arraignmente of the said Witch."

In Nichols's "History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester," there is to be seen a letter from Alderman Robert Heyrick, of Leicester, to his brother Sir William, in the year 1616, relating to a transaction which took place at Husband's Bosworth. The following extract contains the most material and singular parts of it :

"Although we have bene greatly busyed this 4 or 5 days past, being syse tyme, and a busie syse, speacyally about the arraynement of a sort of woomen, Wytches, wt 9 of them shal be executed at the Gallows this fornone, for bewitching of a young gentellman of the adge of 12 or 13 years old, beinge the soon of one Mr. Smythe of Husband's Bosworth, brother to Mr. Henry Smythe, that made the booke which we call Mr. Smythe's Sarmons. Your man Sampson stays, and yt is to tedious to write anny one thing unto you of the matter ; and the examynacyons and finding out of this matter came to my hand in wrytyng just as I began your lettar. Only I will signifye unto you of the chylde's straundg fyts, who was brought hythar of Sayturday last to be shewed to the Judges, and synce his coming hither he hath had dyvars wonderful straundg fyts in the syght of all the greatest parsons here, as dyvers knights and ladies, and many others of the bettar sort most tereb'e to be tolld. Sir Henry Hastings hath doon what he colld to holld him in his fit ; but he and another as strong as he could not hold him ; yf he might have his arm at liberty, he woold stryke himselfe such bloes on his brest, being in his shirt, that you myght here the sound of yt the length of a long chamber, soumtymes 50 bloes, soumtymys 100, yea soumtymys 2 or 300 bloes, that the least of them was able to stryke doune a strong man ; and yet all he did to himself did him no hurt."

In the reign of Charles I. we meet with an extraordinary character in one Hopkins, who was designated as the witch-finder, and upon whose evidence it is said that threescore suspected witches were hanged in one year in Suffolk. It appears that he went on searching and swimming them till some gentlemen, out of indignation at the barbarity, took him and tied his own thumbs and toes as he used to tie others, and when he was put into the water he himself

swam as they did. He is thus recognised by Hudibras in his 3rd canto :

“Has not this present Parliament
A leger to the Devil sent,
Fully empowered to treat about
Finding revolted witches out,
And has not he within a year
Hang'd three score of 'em in one shire?
Who after prov'd himself a witch,
And made a rod for his own breech.”

[1829, *Part II.*, pp. 580-584.]

Sir Giles Overreach.—Dost deal with witches, rascal?
MASSINGER: *New Way to Pay Old Debts.*

In proceeding with our relations, I noticed a pamphlet which made its appearance in 1645, entitled “A true relation of the arraignment of eighteen witches, that were tried, condemned, and executed, at the sessions held at St. Edmund's Bury, in Suffolk, and there, by the judges and justices, condemned to die, and so were executed; and their several confessions before their examination, with a true relation of the manner how they found them out.”

In Voltaire's “Commentary on Marquis Beccaria's Essay on Crimes and Punishments,” he states that in 1652 every tribunal in Europe resounded with judgments against witchcraft, and fire and faggot were universally employed against it. The Turks were reputed with having amongst them neither sorcerers, witches, nor demoniacs, and the want of the latter was considered as an infallible proof of the falsity of their religion.

In 1652 we have “A Prodigious and Tragical History of the Arrayment, Tryall, Confession, and Condemnation, of six Witches, at Maidstone in Kent, at the Assizes there held in July, Frydaye, 30th, this present year, 1652, before the Right Honourable Peter Warburton, one of the Justices of the Common Pleas, Collected from the Observations of E. G. Gent (a learned person, present at their conviction and condemnation), and Digested by H. F. Gent. To which is added a True Relation of one Mrs. Atkins, a Mercer's Wife in Warwick, who was strangely carried away from her House in July last, and hath not been heard of since.”

I now relate the trial of one Jane Brooks, at the Chard Assizes, 26th March, 1658.

In November, 1657, Jane Brooks, of Shepton Mallet, stroked a son of Henry James, after giving him an apple. The boy was twelve years old, and upon returning home was taken ill, and complained of his side. The boy roasted the apple, and, having eaten it, was extremely ill, and sometimes speechless. The boy intimated to his father that Jane Brooks had given him the apple, etc., and the father

was advised to get her into the house. Upon her arrival, the boy was taken so ill that for some time he could not see or speak.

I pass over many other particulars of witchery attributed to Jane Brooks; but on 8th December, 1657, the boy, Jane Brooks, and Alice Coward (to whom also similar practices were attributed), appeared before Mr. Hunt and Mr. Cary, Justices of Peace. The boy, having begun to give his testimony, upon the coming in of the women, and their looking on him, he was instantly taken speechless, and so remained till the women were removed out of the room, and then, recovering, he was enabled to give his evidence.

Upon the second examination the same thing again occurred. And on another appearance, when many gentlemen, ministers, and other persons were present, the boy fell into fits upon the sight of Jane Brooks, and lay in a man's arms like one dead. The woman was then required to lay her hands on him, and he thereupon started and sprang out. One of the justices, to prevent all possibility of legerdemain, caused Gibson and the rest to stand off from the boy, and then the magistrate himself held him; the youth being blindfolded, he called upon Brooks to touch him, but winked others to do it, which two or three successively did, but the boy appeared not affected. The justice then called on the father to take him, but he had privately desired one Geoffry Stode to bring Jane Brooks, to touch him at such a time as he should call for his father, which was done, and the boy immediately sprang out in a very violent manner. He was afterwards touched by several persons and moved not, but Jane Brooks being again caused to put her hand upon him, he started and sprang out twice or thrice as before.

It would be tedious to record the particulars of a variety of other experiments which were tried, with a view of tracing the cause of the boy's affliction to Brooks, which all proved successful. One circumstance, however, which was deposed to by a man and his wife at the trial of Brooks, was of so singular a nature as to deserve notice.

The boy being one day in the garden, and while not at the distance of two yards from these persons, he was seen to rise up from the ground from before them, and so mounted higher and higher till he passed in the air over the garden wall, and was carried so above ground more than thirty yards, falling at last at one Jordan's door, at Shepton, where he was found as dead for a time; but on coming to himself he told these parties that Jane Brooks had taken him up by the arm out of the garden, and carried him into the air as is related.

From the 15th November to 10th March following, he was, by reason of his fits, much wasted in body; but after that time, being the day the two women were sent to the goal, he had no more of these fits.

Jane Brooks was condemned and executed.

The following are the particulars of the trial of Florence Newton

at Cork Assizes in 1661. Mary Langden, upon whom the witchcraft was practised, swore that at Christmas last Florence came to her, at the house of her master John Pyne, in Youghall, and asked her to give her a piece of beef out of the powdering tub. The witness answered that she could not give away her master's beef, upon which Florence was very angry, and said, "Thou hadst as good as given it me," and went her way grumbling. She then stated that a few days afterwards she saw a woman with a veil over her face, and a little old man in silk clothes, and that the man, whom witness took to be a spirit, drew the veil from off the woman's face, and that she knew it to be Florence. That the spirit spoke to witness, and would have had her promise him to follow his advice, and she should have all things after her own heart. To which she answered that she would have nothing to say to him, for her trust was in the Lord. That within a month after Florence had kissed her, witness fell very ill of fits, or trances, which would take her on the sudden; and while in that state three or four men could not hold her. And in those fits she would vomit up needles, pins, horsenails, stubs, wool, and straw. And she goes on to state a variety of other extraordinary occurrences which took place. That on many of these occasions the witch would stick pins in her arms, and some of them so fast that a man must pluck three or four times to get out the pin. That sometime she should be removed out of her bed into another room, sometimes carried to the top of the house, sometimes put into a chest, sometimes under a piece of wool, and a variety of other places, and that she never knew where she was, until taken out of the places by some of the family of the house. That she suffered much affliction while Florence lay in prison, whereupon it was deemed expedient that she should be bolted, which was accordingly done, and the witness got well again, and so continued ever since.

After she had closed her evidence it was observed that Florence peeped at her, as it were betwixt the heads of the bystanders, and lifting up both her hands together, as they were manacled, cast them in an angry violent motion towards the witness, as if she intended to strike at her, if she could have reached her. Upon which she fell suddenly down in a violent fit, and continued so for a quarter of an hour, in the course of which she vomited crooked pins, and straw, and wool. Upon which the Court, recollecting that she had become well upon the bolts being put upon Florence, ordered that bolts should be put upon her, whereupon the maid recovered again.

John Pyne, Esq., the girl's master, in the course of a long examination, confirms her evidence in almost every particular.

Another witness swears to the prisoner having confessed several particulars of witchery, and also that one evening the door of the prison shook, and she arose up hastily, and said, "What makest thou here this time of night?" and there was a very great noise, as if

somebody with bolts and chains had been running up and down the room; and they asked her what it was she spoke to, and made the noise, and she said she saw nothing, neither did she speak, and if she did it was she knew not what; but the next day she confessed it was a spirit and her familiar in the shape of a greyhound.

The confession of the witch is also confirmed by the evidence of several other witnesses, and a minister; and the Mayor of Youghall also deposed to the fits of the girl, and the extraordinary vomiting on these occasions. But besides all this, there is another very singular circumstance related respecting this mischievous individual; as that she bewitched one David Jones to *death*, by kissing his hand through the gate of the prison, for which also she was indicted at the Cork Assizes.

Eleanor Jones, the relict of the unhappy sufferer, being sworn and examined in open Court, what she knew concerning any practice of witchcraft, by Florence Newton, upon her husband David, gave in evidence, that in April then last, her husband, having been out all night, came home early in the morning, and said to her, "Where dost thou think I have been all night?" to which she answered she knew not. Whereupon he replied, "I and Grant Besely (*sic*) have been standing sentinel over the witch all night." On which the wife observed, "Why what hurt is that?" "Hurt," quoth he; "marry I doubt its never a whit better for me, for she hath kissed my hand, and I have had a great pain in that arm, and I verily believe that she hath bewitched me, if ever she bewitched any man." To which she answered, "The Lord forbid." That all night, and continually from that time, he was restless and ill, complaining exceedingly of a great pain in the arm, for seven days together, and at the seven days' end he complained that the pain was come from his arm to his heart, and then kept his bed night and day, grievously afflicted, and crying out against Florence Newton, and about fourteen days afterwards he died.

One Francis Beseley, the gaoler, deposes to Jones having expressed a wish to watch her for the purpose of seeing her familiar, and that he accordingly did so, and that in the course of this time, Beseley having put his hand through the grate, she caught hold of it and kissed it. And witness having afterwards learned that Jones was ill, went to see him, when he told witness that he had been seized with pain, and that the old hag had bewitched him when she kissed his hand, and that she had him then by the hand, and was pulling off his arm. And he said, "Do you not see the old hag, how she pulls them? Well, I lay my death on her; she has bewitched me." And several times after would complain that she had tormented him, and after fourteen days languishing he died.

About this time a suspected witch was tried for practising her arts

upon a young woman, in the course of which trial the following curious scene transpired.

Judge Archer, who tried the prisoner, told the jury he had heard that a witch could not repeat the petition in the Lord's Prayer, "And lead us not into temptation," and having this occasion, he would try the experiment: told the jury that whether she could or could not they were not in the least measure to guide their verdict according to it, because it was not legal evidence, but that they must be guided in their verdict by the former evidence, given in upon oath only. The prisoner was accordingly called to the next bar, and demanded if she could say the Lord's Prayer. She said she could, and went over the prayer readily, till she came to that petition; then she said: "And lead us into temptation," or "And lead us not into no temptation," but could not say it correctly, though she was directed to say it after one that repeated it to her distinctly; but she could not repeat it otherwise than is expressed already, though she tried to do it near half a score times in open Court. [See post, p. 271.]

She, too, was condemned and executed.

Mr. John Mompesson, of Tedworth, Wilts, in 1661, being in a neighbouring town which was annoyed by an idle drummer, who produced a pass which was suspected to be forged, gave him in charge of a constable. He was committed as a vagrant, his drum being sent to Mr. Mompesson's house until the drummer should be discharged. After this some most extraordinary occurrences took place at Mr. Mompesson's house, which were supposed to have ensued from the diabolical art and power of this drummer, and he was accordingly tried as a wizard at the Salisbury Assizes.

The following is the substance of the depositions of witnesses upon the trial. Mr. Mompesson, his wife, and several other members of the family, deposed to their having been for upwards of two months annoyed in the night by a violent drumming which took place almost every night during that period. Sometimes it appeared to be in the room where they slept, sometimes by their ears. When they arose from bed it would appear to be at the top of the house, which continued some time, and then went off into the air. And at its going off the beating was similar to what was heard at the breaking up of a guard. The most diligent search was made by various individuals armed with pistols; but although the drumming was constantly heard, night after night, nothing like a drum could be met with. When this amusement had continued for a period of two or three months, a fresh series were produced for the entertainment of this unhappy family. The younger children were vexed in their beds, the bedsteads receiving blows with such violence that the spectators expected they would be broken in pieces, and crackings were heard under the children's beds, as if by something that had iron talons; it would lift the children up in their beds, follow them from one room to another,

and for a while haunted none particularly but them ; and all this time the drumming continued, and by this time had considerably improved, inasmuch as it for an hour together beat round-heads and cuckolds, the tat-too, and other points of war, as well as any drummer. These things were spoken to by half a house full of people ; amongst others who testified was the parish minister, who on one occasion went to prayers with the family, during which the annoyance ceased, but the moment they were ended it would return, and then in sight of the company the chairs walked about the room of themselves, the children's shoes were hurled over their heads, and every loose thing moved about the chamber ; at the same time a bed-staff was hurled at the parson, which hit him on the leg, but so favourably that a lock of wool could not fall more softly, and it was observed that it stopped just where it alighted, without rolling or moving from the place.

Mr. Mompesson, for the safety of his children, lodged them in a neighbour's house ; and there, strange to say, the same system was pursued, and the drumming noises and disturbances carried on with similar spirit and vigour, and it was noticed that when the noise was loudest, and came with the most sudden surprise and violence, no dog in the house would move, though the cracking was oft so boisterous that it was heard at a considerable distance in the fields, and awakened the neighbours in the village, none of which were very near the house. The servants were sometimes lifted up with their beds, and let down gently again without being hurt, and at other times it would be like a great weight upon their feet.

It would be endless to recount all the astonishing feats which were exhibited in the house of this ill-fated family ; they continued for several months longer without any cessation, the entertainments being exceedingly various and diversified. A narration of these would fill many pages, but it may be sufficient to say they were sworn to upon the trial of the drummer by Mr. Mompesson and his family, the minister of the parish, Sir Thomas Chamberlin, and many other respectable inhabitants of the place, who had been eye and ear witnesses of them time after time. What caused suspicion to fall upon the drummer was this : While he was in custody, a Wiltshireman coming to see him, he asked "What news in Wiltshire?" The man said he knew of none. "No," said the drummer ; "do you not hear of the drumming at a gentleman's house at Tedworth?" "That I do, enough," said the man. "I," quoth the drummer, "have plagued him, and he shall never be quiet till he hath made me satisfied for taking away my drum." Upon information of this he was tried for a witch, convicted, and transported.

It appears that in 1670 a village named Molera, in Switzerland, was reduced to a miserable condition by a strange witchcraft which prevailed there ; which being communicated to the king, he appointed certain commissioners, some of the clergy, and some of the laity, to

examine the whole business. When they met at the minister's house, numbers of people of fashion appeared before them, and with tears complained of the miserable condition they were in, and therefore begged of them to think of some way whereby they might be delivered from that calamity. The commissioners proceeded in their investigation of the devil's tyranny at this place, and found that he had drawn some hundreds, and made them subjects of his power; that he had been seen to go in a visible shape through the country, and appeared daily to the people, and that he had wrought upon the poorer sort by presenting them with meat and drink, and this way allured them to himself. A day of humiliation was instituted by royal authority for removing this judgment. Two sermons were preached, in which the miserable case of those that suffered themselves to be deluded by the devil was laid open; and these sermons were concluded with fervent prayer. The commissioners afterwards proceeded in their examination, and discovered threescore and ten witches in the village, twenty-three of whom freely confessed their crimes; some were discharged upon a promise of recantation, many were executed, and the remainder received a milder punishment.

In 1682 was published "A true and impartial relation of the informations against three Witches, viz., Temperence Lloyd, Mary Gremble, and Susanna Edwards, who were indicted, arraigned, and convicted at the assizes holden for the county of Devon at the Castle of Exon, Aug. 14, 1682, with their several confessions taken before Thomas Gist, mayor, and John Davie, alderman, of Biddeford, as also their speeches, confessions, and behaviour at the time and place of execution on the 25th of the said month." [See Hazlitt loc. cit. p. 126.]

"The wonder of Suffolke, being a true relation of one that reports he made a league with the Devil for three years, to do mischief, and now breaks open houses, robs people daily, destroys cattle before the owners' faces, strips women naked, etc., and can neither be shot nor taken, but leaps over walls fifteen feet high, runs five or six miles in a quarter of an hour, and sometimes vanishes in the midst of multitudes that go to take him. Faithfully written in a letter from a solemn person, dated not long since, to a friend in Ship-yard, near Temple Bar, and ready to be attested by hundreds that have been spectators of, or sufferers by, his exploits in several parts of Suffolk. Printed in London, 1677."

[1830, *Part I.*, pp. 24-29.]

"Witches and spells in antient time
Were sacred subjects ev'n in rhyme;
No wonder that should be received
Which laws condemned and kings believ'd,
But now of late, since royal speeches
Have kept to weightier things than Witches,

Since Parliament (whom Heav'n direct)
Have treated Satan with neglect,
The vulgar learn to take the hint,
And find the whole has nothing in't."

Lines on the passing of the Repeal Bill.

The next circumstance to be recorded, in proceeding with our historical relations, is a curious document, being an account of expenses debited to the town and kirk sessions of Culross, in Scotland, for burning three witches, who had been condemned towards the close of the seventeenth century.

	£	s.
Imprimis. To Mr. James Miller, when he went to Prestawne for a man to try them	-	2 7
Item. To the man of Culross (the executioner), when he went away the first time	-	0 12
Item. For coals for the Witches	-	1 4
Item. In purchasing the commission	-	9 3
Item. For one to go to Tumiruth for the laird to sit upon their assize as a Judge	-	0 6
Item. For harden to be jumps to them	-	3 10
Item. For making of them	-	0 8
Item. For a tar barrel	-	0 14

Another remarkable transaction of this kind is a case of Elizabeth Style, who was tried and convicted for witchcraft and sorcery upon her own confession. The circumstances which were deposed to by a variety of witnesses, amongst whom was the rector of the parish, are shortly as follows: A daughter of Richard Hill, aged thirteen, was taken with strange fits, which lasted two or three hours or more, and that in these fits the child declared that this Elizabeth Style appeared to her, and was the same who tormented her. While in these fits it was sworn by the witnesses that, though held in a chair by four or five persons by the arms, legs, and shoulders, she would rise out of her chair and raise her body above four or five feet high, and that while in this state there appeared to be holes in her flesh, which the witnesses considered to be with thorns, for they saw thorns in her flesh, and some they hooked out. Among the witnesses was one Richard Vining, who stated that some time previously his late wife Agnes fell out with Elizabeth Style, and within two or three days she was taken with a grievous pricking in her leg, which pain continued for a long time. Some time after Style came to his wife and gave her two apples, which Style requested her to eat; which she did, and in a few hours was taken ill and worse than ever she had been before, and continued so till Easter eve, and then died.

Before her death her leg rotted, and one of her eyes swelled out. She declared to him then, and at several times before, that she be-

lieved Elizabeth Style had bewitched her, and that she was the cause of her death. But the confession of the witch herself is a document of a very curious and extraordinary kind. She confessed that the devil, about ten years previously, appeared to her in the shape of a handsome man, that he promised her money, and that she should live gallantly, and have the pleasure of the world for twelve years, if she would with her blood sign his paper, which was to give her soul to him and observe his laws, and that he might suck her blood. This, after four solicitations, Style promised to do; upon which he pricked the fourth finger of her right hand between the middle and upper joint, where the sign of the time of the confession remained, and with a drop or two of her blood she signed the paper. Upon this the devil gave her sixpence, and vanished with the paper. That he had since appeared to her in the shape of a man; but more usually he appeared in the likeness of a dog, a cat, or a fly, in which last he usually sucked her in the poll about four o'clock in the morning, and did so 27th January. That when she had a desire to do harm she called the spirit by the name of Robin, to whom, when he appeared, she used the words, "O Satan, give me my purpose." She then told him what she would have done; and that he should so appear to her was part of her contract with him. That she had desired him to torment one Elizabeth Hill, and to thrust thorns into her flesh; which he promised to do. The next time he appeared he told her he had done it. She then goes on to recount a variety of other extraordinary adventures between her and three other persons, who also had made a similar contract with the king of fiends, and then acknowledges that the reason why she caused Elizabeth Hill to be the more tormented was, because her father had said she was a witch. And that some two years ago she gave two apples to Agnes Vining, late wife of Richard Vining, and that she had one of the apples from the devil, who then appeared to her, and told her that the apples would do Vining's wife's business.

This confession is certified to have been taken in the presence of several grave and orthodox divines, before Robert Hunt, magistrate, and was free and unforced, without any torturing or watching, drawn from her by a gentle examination, meeting with the convictions of a guilty conscience.

One Nicholas Lambert also swore that after Style had been committed he and two others watched her, agreeably to the magistrate's request; that he, Lambert, sitting near the fire about three o'clock in the morning, and reading in the "Practice of Piety," there came from her head a glittering bright fly, about an inch in length, which pitched at first in the chimney, and then vanished. He looked stedfastly then on Style, perceived her countenance change and to become very black and ghastly; the fire at the same time changed its colour; whereupon Lambert and the two others, considering that her familiar

was then about her, looked to her poll, and seeing her hair shake very strangely, took it up, and then a great fly flew out from the place and pitched on the table-board, and then vanished away. Upon the witnesses looking again in Style's poll, they found it very red, like raw beef. Upon being asked what it was went out of her poll, she said it was a butterfly; and asked them why they had not caught it. Lambert said they could not; she replied, "I think so too." A little while after the informant and others looked upon her poll, and found the place to be of its former colour. Lambert demanded again what the fly was. She confessed it was her familiar, and that she felt it tickle in her poll, and that was the usual time when her familiar came to her.

Elizabeth Torwood then swears that she, together with four other women who also gave evidence to the same effect, searched Style in the poll, and found a little rising which felt hard like a kernel of beef; whereupon they, suspecting it to be an ill mark, thrust a pin into it, and having drawn it out, thrust it in again the second time, that the other women might see it also. Notwithstanding which Style did neither at the first nor second time make the least show that she felt any thing; but after, when the constable told her he would thrust in a pin in the place, and made a shew as if he did, she said he pricked her, whereas no one then touched her.

Style was tried and condemned, but died shortly before the time appointed for her execution. [See post, p. 274.]

Shortly afterwards Alice Duke, one of Style's knot, was tried for a witch, and convicted upon the testimony of many witnesses; and her own confession, which contains a minute account of many extraordinary and devilish tricks, which she, in conjunction with her confederates and his Satanic Majesty, performed; she confesses that her familiar commonly sucked her right breast about seven at night, in the shape of a little cat of a dunnish colour, and when she was sucked she was in a kind of trance. That she hurt Thomas Garrett's cows because he refused to write a petition for her. That she hurt Thomas Conway, by putting a dish into his hand, which dish she had from the devil. That she hurt Dorothy, the wife of George Vining, by giving an iron stake to put into her steeling box. That being angry with Edith Watts for treading on her foot, she cursed her, and afterwards touched her, which had done her much harm, for which she is very sorry. That being provoked by Swanton's wife, she did before her death curse her, and believes she did thereby hurt her; but denies that she did bewitch Mr. Swanton's cattle. And then she gives this suitable information, which may serve to put us on our guard against having anything to do with this father of lies. That when the devil does anything for her, she calls for him by the name of Robin, upon which he appears; and when in the shape of a man, she can hear him speak, but his voice is very low. He promised her

when she had made her contract with him, that she should want nothing, but ever since she wanted all things.

And Conway, his wife, and Watts, also corroborated her statements, by describing on oath the injuries which they had sustained from this acknowledged witch.

The intimation above, as to the devil being a hard master, reminds one of a passage in an old translation of "Bodinus," from which it appears that in Livonia, yearly, about the end of December, a certain knave or devil warneth all the witches in the country to come to a certain place. If they fail, the devil cometh and whippeth them with an iron rod, so as the print of his lashes remains upon their bodies for ever. Which circumstance has thus been preserved by one of our early bards :

"Till on a day (that day is everie Prime)
When Witches wont do penance for their crime."

In the State Trials there is recorded the trial of Richard Hathaway, on 24th March, 1702, upon an indictment charging him with contriving and maliciously intending one Sarah Morduck, who for the whole course of her life was an honest and pious woman, and not a witch, nor using witchcraft, enchantment, charm, or sorcery, to bring into danger of losing her life falsely, maliciously, devilishly, and knowingly, and as a false impostor, did pretend and affirm himself, by the said Sarah to be bewitched; and that he by drawing blood from the said Sarah, by scratching, should be freed from the said pretended witchcraft. That the said R. H. did then and there, with force, etc., draw the blood of her the said Sarah. He was found guilty of this charge, and I merely refer to the trial for the purpose of noticing a curious piece of evidence given by a woman who was examined on his behalf. Lord Chief Justice Holt, "Do you think he was bewitched?" Elizabeth Willoughby, "I believe he was." "I suppose you have some skill in witchcraft; did you ever see anybody that was bewitched before?" "My lord, I have been under the same circumstances myself, when I was a girl, in Sir Edward Bramfield's time." "How do you know you were bewitched?" "There was a woman taken up upon suspicion for it." "For bewitching thee?" "Yes, my lord." "Did you scratch her?" "My lord, I had no power to do anything—I flew over them all; one held me by one arm, another by the other, and another behind, and I flew sheer over their heads." "Can you produce any of these women that saw you fly?" "It was when I was a child; they are dead. I have been well ever since I was married."

In 1705 was published, "A True and Faithful Account of the Birth, Education, Lives, and Convictions of Eleanor Shaw and Mary Phillips (the two notorious witches), that were executed at Northampton, on Saturday, March 17th, 1705, for bewitching a woman and

two children to death, etc., containing the manner and occasion of their turning witches, the league they made with the devil, and the strange discourse they had with him; as also the amazing pranks and remarkable acts both before and after their apprehension, and how they bewitched several persons to death, besides abundance of all sorts of cattle, even to the ruin of many families; with their full confession to the minister, and last dying speeches at the place of execution, the like never before heard of. London, 1705."

In Clutterbuck's "History of Herts," he says, "In this village (*i.e.*, Walkern) lived Jane Wenham, a poor woman, who was accused in several instances of having practised sorcery and witchcraft upon the body of Ann Thorn, upon the oaths of several respectable inhabitants of this neighbourhood, before Sir Henry Chauncey, of Yardly Bury, and by him committed to Hertford gaol. She was afterwards tried at the Assizes on the 4th March, 1712, before Mr. Justice Powell, and being found guilty of the charges brought against her, received sentence of death. The judge, however, made a favourable representation of her case to the Queen, who was graciously pleased to grant her a pardon."

1735. At Burlington, in Pennsylvania, the owners of several cattle believing them to be bewitched, caused some suspected men and women to be taken up, and trials to be made for detecting them. Above three hundred people assembled near the governor's house, and a pair of scales being erected, the suspected persons were each weighed against a large Bible; but all of them vastly outweighed it. The accused were then tied hand and feet together, and put into a river, on the supposition that if they swam they must be guilty. This trial they offered to undergo, in case as many of the accusers should be served in the like manner; which being done, they all swam very buoyantly, to the no small diversion of the spectators, and clearing of the accused.

In the *Frome Daily Journal*, Jan. 15, 1731, there is an account of a child of one Wheeler being seized with strange unaccountable fits; the mother goes to a *cunning man*, who advises her to hang a bottle of the child's water, close stopped, over the fire, and that the witch would thereupon come and break it. The success of this advice is not mentioned; but a poor old woman in the neighbourhood was taken up, and the old trial by water ordeal revived. They dragged her shivering with an ague out of her house, set her astride on the pommel of a saddle, and carried her about two miles to a mill pond, stripped off her upper clothes, tied her legs, and with a rope about her middle threw her in, two hundred spectators huzzaing and abetting in the riot. They affirm she swam like a cork, though forced several times under water. About an hour after she was taken out of the water she expired. The coroner sat on her body, but could make no discovery of the ringleaders; although above forty persons assisted in

the act, yet none of them could be persuaded to accuse his neighbour, so that the inquest were able to charge only three of them with manslaughter.

We must now notice the statute which was passed in the 9th year of the reign of George II., c. 5, whereby all previous statutes against witchcraft, etc., are repealed. And it is thereby enacted, that all persons pretending to exercise or use any kind of witchcraft, sorcery, enchantment, or conjuration, or undertake to tell fortunes, or pretend from his or her skill or knowledge in any occult or crafty science to discover where, or in what manner, any goods or chattels supposed to have been lost or stolen may be found, shall, upon conviction, be imprisoned for a year, and once in every quarter of a year in some market-place of the proper county upon the market day, stand openly on the pillory by the space of one hour, and also give security for good behaviour.

The passing of this Act seems to have given general satisfaction to the community, and at the time gave rise to several droll essays and poems upon the subject, which are to be found in the *Gentleman's Magazine* and other periodicals of that day. [See post, pp. 253, 256.] But, although numbers rejoiced at the repeal of the obnoxious statutes which had so long continued on the statute-book, to the terror of antient females, there were others who contemplated the measure with some alarm, and anticipated strange work from the circumstance of the devil being thus fairly let loose.

In April, 1751, at Tring in Herts, a publican giving out that he was bewitched by one Osborne and his wife, harmless people above 70, had it cried at several market towns that they were to be tried by ducking on April 22, which occasioned a vast concourse. [See post, p. 267.]

22 June, 1760. At a General Quarter Sessions for Leicester, two persons, concerned in ducking for witches all the poor old women in Glen and Burton Overy, were sentenced to stand in the pillory twice, and to be in gaol one month.

28 Nov., 1762. A number of people surrounded the house of John Pritchers of West Langdon in Kent, and under a notion of his wife having bewitched a boy 13 years old, dragged her out by violence, and compelled her to go to the boy's father, about a mile from her own, where they forced her into the room where the boy was, scratched her arms and face in a most cruel manner to draw blood, and they threatened to swim her, but some people of condition interfering, the poor woman's life was happily preserved; and the persons concerned in carrying on the imposture, particularly one Beard and Ladd's wife, being carried before a magistrate, and compelled to make satisfaction to the unhappy injured woman, the mob dispersed, and the country, that was everywhere in tumult, again quieted. The boy pretended to void needles and pins from his body, and his father and mother upheld

the deceit, and collected large sums of those whose compassion was excited.

15 Nov., 1775. Nine old women were burned at Kaleck in Poland, charged with having bewitched and rendered unfruitful the lands belonging to a gentleman in the Palatinate.

1 July, 1776. A woman at Earls Shilton in Leicestershire, being sometime previously seized with an uncommon disorder, her friends took it into their heads that she was bewitched by a poor old creature in the neighbourhood who could scarce crawl. To this miserable object the diseased, her husband, and son (a soldier), went and threatened to destroy her if she did not instantly suffer blood to be drawn from her body, bless the woman, and remove her disorder. Hesitating a little, the son drew his sword, and pointing it to her breast, swore he would plunge it into her heart if she did not instantly comply, which being consented to, they all returned home, seemingly satisfied; but the part not being relieved, they raised a mob, seized the old woman, dragged her to a pond, cruelly plunged her in to the waist, and were proceeding to practise some of the ancient expedients, when, fortunately for her, she was rescued from their hands by the humanity of the neighbouring gentlemen.

[1830, *Part I.*, pp. 107-110.]

"Behold them front to front, accursed both,
Saul and the Sorceress. Her inquisitive gaze
Glar'd on him; and his eyelid gradual sank
Beneath her searching."—W. SOTHEY: *Saul* [1807, 4to.].

At the Taunton Assizes, 1811, Betty Townsend, aged 77, considered by the superstitious as a witch, was tried for obtaining money from a child under the following circumstances. The prosecutor, Jacob Poole, a labouring man, had been in the habit of sending his daughter, aged thirteen, with apples in a basket to market. On Jan. 24, the old woman met with the girl, and asked to see what she had got in her basket, which having examined, she said to her, "Hast got any money?" The child said she had none. "Then get some for me," said the old woman, "and bring it to me at the castle door, or I will kill thee." The child, terrified to an extreme at such a threat from a witch, procured two shillings, and carried it to her, when the old woman said, "'Tis a good thing thou hast got it, or else I would have made thee die by inches." She practised this upon the child several times, obtaining in all £2 6s. 5d. This was at length disclosed by the child to her mother, who accused the witch, whereupon she swore that if any one dared to accuse her, she would make them die by inches. "No," said Mrs. Poole, who considered that she knew more about witches than her daughter; "that thee shall not; I'll hinder that;" and, taking a pin from her clothes, scratched the witch from the elbow to the wrist, in three different places, to draw her blood; a

process believed to be of unfailing efficacy as an antidote to witchcraft.

It appears, by the "Annual Register" of 1802, that five women were tried at Putna, in Hindostan, on charges of sorcery, and being found guilty, were put to death. The Governor-General, on being informed of the circumstance, ordered all the principal persons who composed the tribunals to be apprehended, and arraigned before the Circuit Court of Putna, on charges of the murder of these women; and the Court ordered them to suffer death. It appeared, however, that this custom had been preserved time immemorial. Several of the witnesses referred to numerous instances of persons having been put to death by the Brahmins for sorcery; and one of them, in particular, proved that his own mother had been tried and executed as a witch. The Governor therefore pardoned the officers; but, to prevent the recurrence of a circumstance so disgraceful to humanity, a proclamation was forthwith issued, declaring that anyone forming a tribunal for the trial of persons charged with witchcraft, or aiding or encouraging in any act to deprive such persons of life, shall be deemed guilty of murder, and suffer the penalty attached to that offence.

On the 11th April, 1827, at the Monmouth Assizes, William Watkins, and three others, were indicted and found guilty of an assault upon Mary Nicolas, a decrepit old woman, upwards of ninety, which they had committed under a belief, prevalent in that neighbourhood, that she was a witch. The old woman deposed to the prisoners and others having seized her, and beaten her with thorns and briars, for the purpose of, as in days of yore, drawing blood; and they also attempted to force her into a pool, for the purpose of trying the efficacy of the water ordeal.

A witness proved the prisoners having taken the old woman to a lane where three cattle had died, and charged her with being the author of their death; and then, taking her to a stable where there was a colt, made her repeat several times, "God bless the colt!" They afterwards stripped her naked, and searched her, in order to find her teat, which they declared they had found, upon their discovering a wart or wen upon her head.

This, in all probability, is the latest instance to be met with of English credulity as to the existence of this surprising art, and it may be questionable whether it will not be the last. [See Note 42.]

From what has been stated, it will be perceived that the ladies, with but very few exceptions, have possessed the honour of being the exclusive proprietors of this peculiar charm; and it may be expected that, in a treatise of this kind, the writer should attempt to give some account of this, and explain the cause to which it may be attributed.

By what means the ladies, in preference to the other sex, became

thus peculiarly gifted, I have not been able distinctly to ascertain. One Richard Barnard, however, a minister at Batcombe, in Somerset, in 1627, attempted to account for this singular monopoly, in a little work entitled, "A Guide to Grand Jurymen about the Trial of Witches."

"There are more women witches," says he, "than men, and it may be for these reasons :—First, Satan his setting upon these rather than on men, since his unhappie outset and prevailing with Eve. Secondly, their more credulous nature, and apt to be misled and deceived. Thirdly, for that they are commonlie more impatient and more superstitious ; and, being displeased, more malicious, and so more apt to bitter cursing ; and far more revengeful, according to their power, than men, and so herein more fit instruments of the devill. Fourthly, they are more tongue-ripe, and less able to hide what they know from others ; and therefore, in this respect, are more ready to be teachers of witchcraft to others, and to leave it to children, servants, or to some others, than men. Fifthly and lastly, because, where they think they can command, they are more proud in their rule, and more busy in setting such on worke whom they may command, than men, and therefore the devill laboureth most to make them witches ; because they, upon every light displeasure, will set him on worke, which is that which he desireth, and is sore displeased if he bee not set on worke, which women will be ready enough to doe."

It is time now to bring this subject to a close ; and, in doing so, it may not be altogether useless if we endeavour to satisfy ourselves whether or not there is any foundation for the belief, which appears to have been entertained in every age and in every country, that this extraordinary power has been possessed by our frail species.

Sir Matthew Hale has said, that there were such creatures as witches, he made no doubt at all, for these reasons :—First, the Holy Scriptures have affirmed it. Secondly, the wisdom of all nations has provided laws against such persons, which seems to imply a confident belief in the existence of witchcraft. Can it, in short, be allowed that all the world have conspired together to cheat and juggle mankind on this subject ; that every recorded instance is false ; that every one of the many thousands who have suffered death, had no commerce with an evil spirit, without whose influence it cannot be believed that they could have performed these astonishing feats ; that all the countless host of witnesses were, to a man, liars and perjurers ; and the judges and juries of the accused fools and murderers ?

Upon the whole, the safest conclusion appears to be that which was come to by the enlightened Blackstone, doubtless after much reflection upon the subject, who adopted the opinion entertained by a celebrated essayist in 1711. After a description of the crime of witchcraft, in the fourth volume of his "Commentaries," p. 60, Blackstone says :

"To deny the possibility, nay, actual existence of witchcraft and sorcery, is at once flatly to contradict the revealed word of God, in various passages both of the Old and New Testaments; and the thing itself is a truth to which every nation in the world has in its turn borne testimony, either by examples seemingly well attested, or by prohibitory laws, which at least suppose the possibility of a commerce with evil spirits. The civil law punishes with death not only the sorcerers themselves, but also those who consult them, imitating in the former the express law of God—'Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.' And our own laws, both before and since the Conquest, have been equally penal, ranking the crime in the same class with heresy, and condemning both to the flames. Wherefore," he adds, "it seems to be the most eligible way to come to the conclusion of an ingenious writer of our own."

The conclusion referred to will be found in No. 117 of *The Spectator*, which, it is said, was written by the elegant and sensible Addison, and produced a great sensation in the year 1711, having materially shook the popular credulity, no one having been put to death in this country after that period, although one was hanged in 1705, and several were afterwards convicted. With the observations of this estimable man, as they entirely coincide with my own humble opinions, I close this subject:

"When I hear the relations that are made from all parts of the world, not only from Norway and Lapland, from the East and West Indies, but from every particular nation in Europe, I cannot forbear thinking that there is such an intercourse and commerce with evil spirits as that which we express by the name of witchcraft. But when I consider that the ignorant and credulous parts of the world abound most in these relations, and that the persons amongst us who are supposed to engage in such an infernal commerce are people of a weak understanding and crazed imagination; and at the same time reflect upon the many impostures and delusions of this nature that have been detected in all ages, I endeavour to suspend my belief till I hear more certain accounts than any which have yet come to my knowledge. In short, when I consider the question—whether there are such persons in the world as those we call witches, my mind is divided between the two opposite opinions; or rather, to speak my thoughts freely, I believe in several that there is, and has been, such a thing as witchcraft; but, at the same time, can give no credit to any particular modern instance of it."

Yours, etc., I. P.

[Under the heading "Original Documents," the *Gent. Mag.* for October, 1860, pp. 380-385, contains an account and transcript of documents in the State Paper Office, Domestic Series, temp. Eliz., which illustrate the superstition that a little waxen figure formed to represent

some particular person might be rendered capable by magical enchantments of entering into such intimate sympathy with the person represented that any torture inflicted on the symbol would affect the being symbolized. The principal parties to the transaction here revealed were one Robert Birch, a reputed conjurer, and Mrs. Dewse, of whose station in life nothing appears, but who was evidently the wife of a man well-to-do in the world. The persons to whom the injury was to be done were "those knaves," Rowland Heyward, the Lord Mayor, and Justice Young. These persons had so misrepresented the case of the Dewses to the authorities that they would not hear the husband's petition. Her desire was to have "all their pictures, and prick them with pins, that they might think it was God's doing. . . . She meant to prick them all at the heart, and if they died, all except the Lord Chancellor, it was no matter." The conjuror Birch went to Justice Young and revealed the whole plot. Under the justice's direction he played the spy, assisted her in making three of the images, and saw her thrust a pin in the heart of each of those intended for Young and Sir Rowland Heyward, with an additional one under Heyward's ribs, and two pins into the eyes of the image intended for a person named Pye. The documents setting forth these particulars are "Information against Dewse's wife, January, 1589-90," and "Mr. Birche's Report of Mrs. Dewse's words, Jan., 1590."]

Repeal of the Witch Act.

Craftsman, Feb. 21, No. 503.

RACHEL FORESIGHT TO MR. D'ANVERS.

[1736, pp. 87-89.]

SIR,—Since you have already done the fair sex justice, as to their political capacities, and professed your readiness to do it, upon all other occasions, I must put you in mind of one endowment, for which they have been famous in all ages; I mean the spirit of prophecy.

The oracles of the ancient Sibyls (who were all women) have acquir'd such an established reputation in the world, that they will for ever do honour to our sex. One of them, who resided at Delphos; had so much authority among the Grecians, that no important enterprise was undertaken without her advice; and the writings of another, who liv'd in a cave at Cumæ, were held in such high veneration amongst the Romans, that two religious officers were appointed on purpose to consult them, upon all great occasions, by order of the Senate.

There are very few nations in the world which have not produc'd some of these female sages. Ægypt was so famous for the art of divination, that a gypsy, or Ægyptian, is a common name for a fortune-

teller to this day ; and if we may judge of the antient race by their pretended descendants, there were more women than men endow'd with this gift.

But no country in Europe hath been more productive of these female astrologers and magicians than our own. Lancashire, my native county and place of residence, was always look'd upon as a colony of witches ; and the western Isles of Scotland have been equally renown'd for a certain kind of soothsayers, call'd second-sighted persons. But I shall confine myself, at present, to that celebrated Yorkshire Sibyl, Mrs. Ursula Shipton, commonly called Mother Shipton, who flourish'd in the reign of Henry VIII. ; and since Merlin, the Welsh oracle, has lately had so much honour done him, I think it a little hard that no notice should be taken of his sister in the same art.

This great prophetess came into the world, like her brother Merlin, in a very extraordinary manner, being begot by a dæmon in masquerade, on the body of a poor young girl, whom he found bemoaning her condition by the side of a river.

Many notable pranks are recorded of her, during her childhood, as setting women upon their heads, and transforming men into horned beasts ; and her fame soon spread through the kingdom, multitudes of all ranks resorted to her for the knowledge of future events, which she explain'd to them in several mystical prophecies, particularly Cardinal Wolsey's downfall, and the reformation of religion ; but the following is the most remarkable of them all. [See *ante*, p. 231.]

This prophecy is interpreted as follows : the cow meant K. Henry, who gave it in his arms as E. of Richmond, and the bull betoken'd Mrs. Anne Bulloigne, whom the king took to wife, either because the first syllable of her name was bull, or because her father bore the bull's head for his crest. The rest of the prophecy is apply'd to the suppression of monasteries, in that reign, with which it agrees well enough. But that the cow should signify the king, and the bull the queen, seems to be so inconsistent with the character of Henry VIII. that I submit it to you, and the publick, whether the whole will not bear some other construction.

Whatever might be meant by this prophecy, the great character Mother Shipton hath so justly obtain'd by her other predictions, puts it beyond all doubt that it either hath been, or will be fulfilled some time or other ; and I humbly propose it to the ladies of Great Britain, who have the honour of their sex and the interest of necromancy at heart, that a magnificent statue be erected to her memory in some place of publick resort, with Mother Bunch on one side, as her Prime Minister, and Mother Osborne, as her Secretary, on the other.*

[* The name of Mother Bunch first occurs in a tract called *Pasquil's Jestes, mixed with Mother Bunche's Merriments*, which was first published in 1604. Mr. Hazlitt

I am the more free in expressing my concern for the honour of female magick, since a bill is order'd to be brought into the House of Commons, for repealing that pernicious Act of K. James I., which seems to have been calculated to destroy all the conjurers in the kingdom, except himself; for without some proficiency in that art, it would have been impossible for him to smell out a gunpowder plot in the letter to Lord Monteaule, if he had no other intelligence. Yet such a terrible enemy was he to all people, possess'd of the same faculty, that he not only wrote an ever-memorable treatise, call'd "Dæmonology," against them, but caus'd that severe Act to be pass'd, and enjoin'd all his judges to put it strictly in execution. This, no doubt, was a terrible discouragement to the gifts of prophecy; and though the Act made no distinction of sexes, yet ours was much the greatest sufferer by it; for it was come to that pass at last that a woman could hardly grow poor, old and ugly (which are curses enough, in all conscience, of themselves) without danger of being hang'd for a witch.

Neither do I suppose that the repeal of this Act is intended purely as matter of favour to us; for as we have some great men amongst us, who have justly acquir'd the reputation of being wizards, or conjurers, their enemies might take an opportunity of putting this law in force against them, for want of other means to gratify their bloody-minded vows and resentments.

Since the persons included in this Act are, 1. Conjurers; who make use of invocations, or magick words, to raise the devil, and compel him to execute their commands.—Now, I'll appeal to you, Mr. D'Anvers, whether several things, both at home and abroad, could have been lately brought to pass, if a certain gentleman, who shall be nameless, had not had some dealing with another gentleman in black.

2. Witches, or Wizards; who covenant with evil spirits, and entertain them in their service, by fees or rewards.—This is so common and well known a case, that it stands in need of no explanation.

3. Sorcerers or Charmers; who by the means of images and odd representations of persons, or things, produce strange effects above the ordinary course of nature. I believe nobody will read this article, without casting his eyes on a little, cunning man, who hath been muddling in the black art, and produced several strange effects, certainly above the ordinary course of nature; for I will defy the wisest

has reprinted it in his *Shakespeare Jestbooks*. A chap book subsequently appeared entitled *Mother Bunch's closet newly broke open*, of which the earliest known copy is dated 1685. This became very popular and was several times reprinted, and subsequently a second part was added. It is full of curious items of folklore, consisting chiefly of love-charms, etc., and Sir Henry Ellis used it in his edition of Brand's *Popular Antiquities*. Who Mother Osborne was is not quite so certain. No doubt, like Mother Bunch, Eleanor Rumming, and Long Meg of Westminster, she was some noted ale-wife who made herself popular among the wits of the day.]

man in Europe to prove that the late happy turn of affairs, in favour of the emperor, was the natural effect of his negotiations, for ten years past. By what kind of means he hath done this, whether by the prevailing influence of certain images, or any odd representation of person, I cannot say; but he is certainly within the statute, as a sorcerer, therefore I shall be glad to see it repeal'd.

I must likewise observe that you have been suspected of keeping a familiar yourself; for how could you otherwise foretell so many remarkable events, which came exactly to pass according to your predictions?

It is therefore for the good of all parties that this act should be repeal'd; and we have no reason to doubt it, since it will not only answer the purpose of an act of indemnity and secure the great persons mentioned from any indictment, or articles of impeachment, as conjurors; but, perhaps, give them grace, for the future, to defy the devil and all his works.

I am come to town, with several of my countrywomen, to use my interest, on this occasion; for I think it is as incumbent upon all persons, who think themselves a little wiser than their neighbours (and that is no inconsiderable party, in this kingdom) to promote the repeal of this law, as the Dissenters do to solicit that of the Test; but I was sorry to hear that three or four persons should be so indiscreet as to appear, at the last Masquerade, in their proper characters, and perform several magical operations, before we have actually gain'd our point; for I am very apprehensive that this may be esteem'd an insult upon authority, as the law stands at present, and perhaps induce some persons to oppose the repeal of it.

Your unknown friend,

RACHEL FORESIGHT.

AGAINST THE REPEAL OF THE WITCH ACT.

From the *World*, August 23.

[1753, pp. 378, 379.]

Certain it is that the repeal of an Act of Parliament, meant to restrain the power of the devil by inflicting death upon his agents, must infallibly give him a much greater influence over us, than he ever could have hoped for, during the continuance of such an Act.

That the devil may truly be said to be let loose among us by the repeal of this Act, will appear beyond contradiction, if we take a survey of the general fascination that all ranks and orders of mankind seem at present to be under.

What is it but witchcraft that occasions that universal and uncontrollable rage of play, by which the nobleman, the man of fashion, the merchant and the tradesman, with their wives, sons and daughters, are running headlong to ruin? What is it but witchcraft that con-

juries up that spirit of pride and passion for expence, by which all classes of men, from his grace at Westminster to the salesman at Wapping, are entailing beggary upon their old age, and bequeathing their children to poverty and the parish? Again, is it possible to be accounted for, from any natural cause, that persons of good sense and sober dispositions should take a freak four or five times in a winter of turning their houses into inns; cramming every bedchamber, closet and corner with people whom they hardly know; stifling one another with heat; blocking up the streets with chairs and coaches; offending themselves, and pleasing nobody; and all this for the vain boast of having drawn together* a greater mob than my Lady Somebody, or the honourable Mr. Such-an-one? That nothing but witchcraft can be the occasion of so much folly and absurdity, must be obvious to the common-sense of all mankind.

Another and more melancholy proof of the power of witchcraft is, that a wife may be beautiful in her person, gentle in her manners, fond of her husband, watchful for his quiet, careful of his interest, kind to his children, chearful to his friends, and obliging to all; yet be yoked to a wretch so blind to his own happiness, as to prefer to her endearments the hired embraces of a diseased prostitute, loathsome in her person, and a fury in her disposition. If this is not witchcraft, I should be glad to know of such a husband what name I may call it by. Among the lower kind of tradesmen (for every dealer in broken glass bottles has his *fille-de-joie*) it is a common thing for a husband to kick his wife out of doors in the morning, for his having submitted overnight to a good drubbing from his mistress.

It would be endless to take notice of every argument that suggests itself in proof of witchcraft; I shall content myself with only one more, which I take to be incontestable. This is the spirit of Jacobitism, which is so well known to possess many of his majesty's Protestant subjects in this kingdom.

From all these considerations it is much to be wished that a new Witch Act may take place next sessions of Parliament.

To secure yourself within doors against the enchantments of witches, especially if you are a person of fashion, and have never been taught the Lord's prayer, the only method I know of is, to nail a horseshoe upon the threshold. This I can affirm to be of the greatest efficacy; insomuch that I have taken notice of many a little cottage in the country, with a horseshoe at its door, where gaming, extravagance, routs, adultery, Jacobitism, and all the catalogue of witchcrafts have been totally unknown.

* See p. 199. [Tuesday, 17th April, 1753. "Was the greatest rout of coaches that has this winter been known, at the Earl and Countess of Bath's. The lower ranks of people have also a kind of routs at public-houses under the name of Chair Clubs."]

On Sorcery and Witchcraft.

[1763, pp. 12-15.]

One of the vain and groundless pretensions of the ancient professors of sorcery and witchcraft was, that they could raise, controul, and dispose of the winds. Thus Medea says,

"Ventos abigouque vocoque."—*OV. : Met. vii.* [202.]

The witches in "Macbeth" converse to the same effect :

1st Witch. A sailor's wife had chesnuts in her lap,
And mouncht, and mouncht, and mouncht ; Give me, quoth I.
Aroint thee, witch !—the rump-fed ronyon cries,
Her husband's to Aleppo gone, master o' th' *Tyger*,
But in a sieve I'll thither sail,
And like a rat without a tail,
I'll do—I'll do—and I'll do.

2nd Witch. I'll give thee a wind.

1st Witch. Thou art kind.

3rd Witch. And I another,

1st Witch. I myself have all the other.
And the very points they blow ;
All the quarters that they know
I' th' shipman's card

* * * * *

Though his bark cannot be lost
Yet it shall be tempest-tost."—*Act i. Sc. 3.*

"The Laplanders," says Scheffer, "have a cord tied with knots for the raising of the wind ; they, as Ziegler relates it, tie their magical knots in this cord ; when they untie the first there blows a favourable gale of wind, when the second, a brisker ; when the third, the sea and wind grow mighty stormy and tempestuous. This that we have reported concerning the Laplanders, is by Olaus Magnus, and justly, related of the Finlanders, who border on the sea, and sell winds to those merchants that traffic with them, when they are at any time detained by a contrary one."

Scheffer thinks that what Ziegler relates of the Laplanders does not, in fact, belong to them, but to the Finlanders of Norway, because no other writers mention it, and because the Laplanders live in an inland country. However, the method of selling winds is this : "They deliver a small rope with three knots upon it, with this caution, that when they loose the first they shall have a good wind ; if the second, a stronger ; if the third, such a storm will arise that they can neither see how to direct the ship and avoid rocks, or so much as stand upon the decks, or handle the tackling." He notes also another particular, not less extraordinary than the selling of winds. "Those," says he, "that are skilled in this art, have command chiefly over the winds that blow at their birth, so that this

wind obeys principally one man, that another, as if they obtained this power when they first received their birth." Something of this, of one person's having power over one wind, and another over another, is evidently alluded to in the conversation of the witches in "Macbeth," quoted above. These Northern wizards pretended also to a power of stopping the course of ships. This, it seems, was attributed both to the Finlanders of Norway, and the Laplanders, who, according to the different affection they have for merchants, make the sea either calmer or more tempestuous.*

But, sir, I shall now show you that these notions and practices were not confined to these Northern parts only, but likewise extended to the more Southern ones. Thus Pomponius Mela, who wrote in the reign of the Emperor Claudius, delivers, concerning a set of priestesses in the island of Sena, or the Isle des Saints, on the coast of Gaul, "Sena, in Britannico mari Osismicis adversa litoribus, Gallici numinis† oraculo insignis est: Cujus antistites, perpetua virginitate sanctæ, numero novem esse traduntur; Barrigenas vocant, putantque ingeniis singularibus præditas, maria ac ventos concitare carminibus, seque, in quæ velint animalia, vertere, sanare quæ apud alios insanabilia sunt, scire ventura et prædicare: sed non nisi deditas navigantibus, et in id tantum ut se consularent profectis;"‡ which may be

* Scheffer's *Hist. of Lapland* [Oxford, 1674, fol.], p. 58.

† 'Tis uncertain whether this means the Gallic deity, *κατ' ἔξοχην* or only a Gallic deity. I understand it in the latter sense, and shall intimate in a future letter that he was probably the God whom the Gauls worshipped under the idea, and with the attributes of Bacchus. [See pp. 81, 82 of the same volume: The Gauls, in Cæsar's time, were extremely addicted to superstition of all kinds, as he tells us, Lib. vi. "De Bello Gall.," sect. 16. "Natio est omnium Gallorum, admodum dedita religionibus." And so, it seems, they continued. The passage which I lately cited from Pomp. Mela iii., c. 6, being a flagrant instance of it. But the word Barrigenas, which occurs in the neat edition of Abr. Gronovius, and is the reading of his father Jacob, and of Is. Vossius, stands, in my opinion, upon no solid bottom. The MSS. have "Gallicenas," "Galligenas," or "Gallizenas"; and from hence Is. Vossius corrected it "Barrigenas," which is now commonly received. It happens, Sir, that Ricardus Corinensis, lately published by M. Bertram, at Copenhagen, has transcribed this passage, p. 47, and in the MS. he used, it stood "Senas Galli vocant"; by which transposition, and the reading of "Senas" for "Genas," the principal foundations of Vossius's conjecture are totally subverted and destroyed. But now the French themselves, particularly the most learned and polite Menage, give a more rational etymology of that word. "*Baragouin*," says this excellent author, "de ces deux mots *bara* & *guin*, qui signifient en Bas-Breton *pain* et *vin*, qui sont les deux choses dont on apprend premierement les noms quand on apprend les langues estrangeres. De ce mot *Baraguin* on a fait la verbe *baraguiner*, qui est comme qui diroit ne sçavoir aultre chose d'une langue que les mots du *pain* et de *vin*," etc. This now agrees very well with the glossaries, where "Barrigenæ" are explained by "Peregrinæ," and "Barbaræ"; and is, in my opinion, the true original of the word "*Baragouin*."]]

‡ *P. Mela*, iii., c. 6.

translated thus: "The island of Sena, which lies in the British sea, opposite to the coast of Osismici, is famous for an oracle of a Gaulish deity. The priestesses, who profess perpetual virginity, are said to be in number nine: they call them Barriginæ, and esteem them to be endowed with very extraordinary qualities; such as troubling the sea, and raising the winds by their enchantments; transforming themselves into whatever animals they please; curing disorders incurable by everybody else, and knowing and foretelling things future. However, they are subservient only to sea-faring people, and only to such of them as come on purpose to consult them."

'Tis remarkable that they were thought not only able to disturb the sea and raise the wind, as the Laplanders, or rather Finlanders, above are supposed to be; but moreover to be employed, as they were, chiefly in the service of navigators, which makes the resemblance more striking. A learned man thinks, and another great scholar assents to it, that the French word "Baragouin" comes from the mumblings and gibberish of these sorcerers, who were called "Barriginæ."

But there is an instance still more apposite than this; Ranulph Higden tells us in the "Polychronicon," p. 195, that the witches in the Isle of Man anciently sold winds to mariners, and delivered them in knots tied upon a thread, exactly as the Laplanders did. "In illa insula vigent sortilegia, superstitiones, atque Præstigia, nam mulieres ibidem navigaturis ventum vendunt, quasi sub tribus fili nodis inclusum, ita ut sicut plus de vento habere voluerint plures nodos evolvant." [See Rolls Series, vol. ii., p. 42.]

This notion of confining and bestowing winds, is as ancient as it was extensive, for thus it is said of Æolus in the "Odyssey":

"The king with mighty gifts my suit approv'd,
The adverse winds in leathern bags he brac'd,
Compress'd their force, and lock'd each struggling blast;
These in my hollow ships the monarch hung
Securely fetter'd by a silver thong."*

Eustatius says they who practised the art of incantation, or charms, made use of the skin of a dolphin, and pretended by certain ceremonies to bind or loose the wind as they pleased.† However, Ulysses's companions were so foolish afterwards as to set these adverse winds at liberty. But there is some difference between this case and those above mentioned; Æolus, being king of the winds, was a proper power to dispose of them; and, moreover, they were the adverse, or unfriendly winds that were imprisoned, whilst the favourable ones were at liberty. Calypso, in other places of the "Odyssey," is supposed to be able to confer favourable winds.‡

* Pope's *Odys.* lib. x. 18 seq.

† See the notes on Pope's *Odys.*, vol. iii., page 6.

‡ See lib. v. 216, 341, and lib. vii. 352.

This approaches nearer to the cases of Lapland and the Isle of Man, only it is not said that her winds were confined, as those of the witches and sorcerers of the north are supposed to be.

Our sailors, I am told, at this very day, I mean the vulgar sort of them, have a strange opinion of the devil's power and agency in stirring up winds, and that this is the reason why they so seldom whistle on ship-board, esteeming that to be a *mocking*, and consequently an enraging, of the devil. And it appears now that even Zoroaster himself imagined there was an evil spirit called Vato, that could excite violent storms of wind.* But, notwithstanding all this, God is said "to bring the winds out of His treasures;" it is also written, that "at His word the stormy wind ariseth;" so that the devil was formerly endeavouring to ape the divine omnipotency in this particular, as well as so many others. He is, indeed, called in Scripture, "the prince of the power of the air;"† and it is wonderful to reflect how far, and how wide, and how generally, he had propagated the false persuasion, that he and his instruments, witches and wizards, had it in their power to raise or abate, to change, to communicate, to sell and transfer, a wind.

Yours, etc., T. ROWE.

Science of the Middle Age attributed to Magic.

[1831, *Part I.*, pp. 486, 487.]

Arts and sciences, philosophy and civilization, are well known, generally speaking, to have had their origin in the East. The frequent journeys of the inhabitants of Europe during the latter end of the twelfth, and in the thirteenth centuries, into those distant climes, in the Crusades, gave birth to several species of knowledge then scarcely known. Ignorance is the enemy of improvement. While men have no desire to emancipate themselves from her slavery, they despise and oppose all that tends to enlighten the mind.

The celebrated Gerbert, however, about this period, or somewhat prior, founded a mathematical school at Rheims, in which he himself taught the elements of that science. He received his knowledge of mathematics from the Arabians. After his death he was treated as a sorcerer: he was said to have made a compact with the devil, from whose clutches he had much difficulty to extricate himself. The exalted station of life to which he arose, the extent of his knowledge in astronomy; the instruments which he invented for the improvement of that science, were quite sufficient in these dark ages to make him be thought a necromancer.

Notwithstanding the ignorance which then prevailed, England produced a Roger Bacon, commonly denominated Friar Bacon; a man

* *Gent. Mag.* 1762, p. 529. [Account of the MSS. attributed to Zoroaster.]

† Ephes. ii. 2.

superior to his age; a man acquainted with mechanics, optics, astronomy, and chemistry; who is said to have been the inventor of burning glasses, of the telescope, and gunpowder. He, too, was accused of magic, because his genius enabled him to soar above the ignorance of his time.

About the same time flourished Albertus Magnus, a man of inquisitive mind, and deeply skilled in the more abstruse sciences, at that period termed "occult," he was deemed, on this account, a magician, and with difficulty escaped the most barbarous tortures. Such accusations are a strong proof how greatly superior those astonishing men were to the age in which they lived. Magic originally consisted in the study of wisdom. Afterwards the magi applied their minds to astrology, divination and sorcery; consequently, in time, men or women who excelled their rude neighbours in civilization and knowledge were branded with the name of magician, an odious character used to signify a diabolical kind of science, depending on the assistance of the infernal host, and the souls of the departed.

Few instances of these necromantic exhibitions occur in our own country, previous to the discovery of the art of printing. After that time our annals are full of them.

About the middle of the fifteenth century, John Fust or Faust, a goldsmith of Mentz, carried a number of Bibles to Paris, which he had caused to be printed, and disposed of them as manuscripts. The uniformity of the copies raised general wonder, being considered as a task beyond human invention. The red ink, with which they were embellished, was said to be his blood, and hence he was accused of being in league with the Devil. From this circumstance arose the story of the Devil and Dr. Faustus, which continues even to the present day.

A little prior to this period flourished Joan of Arc, better known as the Maid of Orleans, who attributed the impulses which she felt to the influence of heaven; but upon her downfall, those who before had regarded her as a saint, considered her as a sorceress, forsaken by the demon who had granted her a fallacious and temporary assistance.

Still later, in the reign of Henry VIII., lived Mother Shipton, whose fame spread through the whole kingdom; and multitudes of all ranks resorted to her for the removal of their doubts, and the knowledge of future contingencies.

This premised, give me leave, Mr. Urban, to venture a conjecture on the figures engraved at page 401 of your last number, on what I conceive to have been an ivory commemorative medal [see note, p. 43]. The story of Friar Bacon's celebrated brazen head is well known. It is said by tradition, that this head was framed by the philosopher for the most beneficent purposes. Had its utterance been properly attended

to, the most happy results were to have been the consequence ; nothing less than the fortification of this kingdom by an irrefragable surrounding barrier of brass. The mystic figure, according to its original designation, in due time solemnly spoke ; and distinctly, at three several intervals of time, uttered, in the most impressive tones, "Time is" (which was the opportunity appointed for making the request), "Time was," and "Time is past." These preternatural voices being heedlessly neglected by a servant in waiting, at the last terrible words the enchanted symbol fell to the ground, the intended beneficial project failed, and the head was instantly shivered into a thousand fragments. The middle figure in the drawing, and which indeed seems composed of inanimate materials, I conceive represents this mysterious head. The person immediately in front is Friar Bacon. The personage on his right, I conjecture, may be Albertus Magnus, rather than Dr. Faustus, as your correspondent supposes ; he being more a contemporary, as appears from the adjoined memorials, with the English philosopher. The three necromantic worthies seemed deeply engaged in the construction and design of the brazen head. Whom the female figure on the left denotes, I am at a loss to conjecture. Anachronism forbids us to suppose it to represent Mother Shipton or even the Maid of Orleans. Some of your correspondents, more deeply versed in "legendary lore," may, perhaps, deign further to elucidate in your pages this popular and youth-interesting incident of the "olden time." [See note 44.]

OMICRON.

Witchcraft in Cheshire.

[1748, p. 413.]

London, Aug. 30, the following paragraph appear'd in the newspapers.

Middlewich, Aug. 28.

There is risen up in this country a great doctress, an old woman, who is resorted to by people of all ranks and degrees, to be cured of all diseases ; she lives four miles from hence, and has been in this great fame about 2 months ; she has several hundreds of patients in a day out of all the country round for 30 miles. I went to see her yesterday out of curiosity, and believe near 600 people were with her. I believe all the country are gone stark mad. The chief thing she cures with is fasting spittle, and "God bless you with faith."

On Sept. 6, this further account was printed in the papers.

Namptwich, Aug. 24.

Old Bridget Bostock fills the country with as much talk as the rebels did. She hath, all her life-time, made it her business to cure her neighbours of sore legs, and other disorders ; but her reputation seems now so wonderfully to increase, that people come to her from far and near. A year ago she had, as I remember, about 40 under

her care, which I found afterwards increased to 100 a week, and then to 160. Sunday se'nnight, after dinner, my wife and I went to this doctress's house, and were told by Mr. S——, and Tom M——, who kept the door, and let people in by fives and sixes, that they had, that day, told 600 she had administer'd to, besides her making a cheese. She, at length, grew so very faint (for she never breaks her fast 'till she has done) that, at 6 o'clock, she was obliged to give over, tho' there were then more than 60 persons whom she had not meddled with. Monday last she had 700, and every day now pretty near that number. She cures the blind, the deaf, the lame of all sorts, the rheumatic, king's evil, hysteric fits, falling fits, shortness of breath, dropsy, palsy, leprosy, cancers, and, in short, almost every thing, except the French disease, which she will not meddle with; and all the means she uses for cure are only stroking with fasting spittle, and praying for them. It is hardly credible to think what cures she daily performs: some people grow well whilst in the house, others on the road home; and, it is said, none miss: people come 60 miles round. In our lane, where there have not been two coaches seen before these twelve years, now three or four pass in a day; and the poor come by cart-loads. She is about 70 years of age, and keeps old Bostock's house, who allow'd her 35s. a year wages: and, tho' money is offered her, yet she takes none for her cures. Her dress is very plain; she wears a flannel waistcoat, a green linsey apron, a pair of clogs, and a plain cap, tied with a half-penny lace. So many people of fashion come now to her, that several of the poor country people make a comfortable subsistence by holding their horses. In short, the poor, the rich, the lame, the blind, and the deaf, all pray for her, and bless her; but the doctors curse her.

We have received a confirmation of these accounts, as follows:

Sandbach, Sept. 1.

SIR,—The old doctress, Bridget Bostock, lives at Coppenhall, between this place and Namptwich, being three miles from each. She is a very plain woman, about 64, and hath followed doctoring for some years to some few people in the neighbourhood. About a quarter of a year ago she came into great fame, for curing of most diseases, by rubbing the place with the fasting spittle of her mouth, and praying for them; she hath had 600 or 700 of a day, and it hath been so throng'd, that a great many people have come, that have stay'd a day or two before they could get to her. She now speaks to none but those that have been with her afore time, and we hear she will not (till next April) excepting such, and those for deafness. The Rev. Mr. Wm. Harding, minister of Coppenhall, gives her a very great character, and saith, that she is one that is a constant frequenter of his church. A son of his was cured of his lameness by her immediately after he had been with her, when all other doctors could

do him no service ; Mrs. Gradwell, of Liverpool, hath wonderfully recover'd her sight, by the assistance of the said doctress. She helps and heals, in a wonderful manner, all persons that come to her, and doth more service to the world than all other doctors besides. Some of this neighbourhood have received great benefits ; but others that have been with her but little.

[1748, pp. 448-451.]

Over Peover, Sept. 26.

In your Magazine for October, you are desired to insert the following, by

Your constant Reader, G. R.

"Disce : sed ira cadat naso, rugosaque sanna,
Dum veteres avias tibi de pulmone revello."—PERS. [v. 91, 92.]

It has been made a question by some, whether the extraordinary cures, ascribed to the famous Bridget Bostock, of Coppenhall, be natural or supernatural effects. I propose here to inquire, and hope to give such a resolution of the matter, as may satisfy reasonable and considering people.

The means she ordinarily makes use of, are to rub the parts affected with her fasting spittle, and to bless or pray for every one that attends her.

Now, whatever natural efficiency or sanative virtue any person may suppose to be in her hand or her spittle, yet that these are not the means by which any cure is effected, nor even necessary to be applied, I think is undeniably evident from this plain matter of fact. Before she practised this way, she used only to take the names of her patients, and to make a short prayer for every one in particular ; and I have been assured by a near neighbour, and one who has constantly attended her, that she cured with as much certainty and success then, without ever so much as seeing the person, as she has done since. He likewise told me, that of late, when she has been attended by such crowds of people, that she could not possibly administer to all, some were sent away with her blessing only, it being all she was able to give them ; and he believed it intirely sufficient. Nay, in several cases, such as convulsions, hystericks, and falling fits, she never requires more than the patient's name, and her prayer does the business. The only reason given for altering her first method is, because her patients presently became so numerous, that she could not, in her own phrase, *think* of them all. From hence it appears, that the application of her hand, and her fasting spittle, is a mere ineffectual ceremony, and that all the supposed efficacy lies in her blessing and her prayer, or words, whatever the form may be, which she makes use of. There is then no *natural* power in the means she uses to

produce the effects pretended : for, that there can be such virtue in any form of words, I think, no sensible person will undertake to prove.

Her cures then, if any be performed, must be supernatural or miraculous effects. Now, besides the improbability that God should give any person a power of working miracles, upon common and ordinary occasions, without some very great and important end in view ; that her pretended cures have really nothing of one in them, will appear from considering something of the nature and properties of a miracle. A miracle is a conspicuous, instantaneous, a compleat and perfect work. It is *conspicuous*, and obvious to the senses of every spectator ; her pretended cures are not so. It is *instantaneous*, and as soon as the fiat is given, the effect is evident ; most of her pretended cures advance by time and slow degrees. It is *perfect*, and needs not a second hand ; her pretended cures are so far different, that, to my certain knowledge, several persons have relapsed ; and this is so incontestable, that for these ten days past she has admitted but few, except her *old* patients.

Besides, there is no instance upon record, and it is indeed absurd to suppose, that any person should be favoured with a power of working miracles, and not know that he is possessed of such a power, nor from whence it is derived, nor for what end it was given : but this, however, is the case of our Copnall doctress. Her wonder-working power she ascribes to the stars, and thinks she can effect any cure, only because she fancies herself born under a lucky planet. So gross is her ignorance.

But some people make Ignorance the mother of Devotion. And why should we not suppose that God may have conferred a peculiar grace upon her, in reward of her devotion, her piety, and her prayers ? St. James seems to give us reason to expect something like this. "Is any sick among you ? Let him call for the elders of the church," etc. He prescribes prayer, and anointing with oil in this case, and the papists have made a sacrament of it ; but, I believe, they allow not a woman to administer it. However, I must observe, that it happens a little unluckily for them, as well as St. Bridget, that the sickness here mentioned was some extraordinary disease, inflicted as a punishment, in those days, upon particular people, for some notorious crimes ; and that the recovery was likewise extraordinary and miraculous, and peculiar to that age of miracles in which the Apostles lived ; as manifestly appears from the instance of Elias immediately subjoined. This, then, will not serve the turn ; because her cures, as we have seen before, are nothing miraculous. Tho' I must say, from what I have observed in this affair, that I am apt to think, miracles will never cease.

There is a famous instance recorded of Mr. Gretrakes, which perhaps some may allege in favour of B. B. He is said to have cured

pains and diseases only by touching ; and the excellent Dr. H. More, who gives a particular account of him, and commends him highly for his piety, virtue, and good qualities, attributes his great success to a certain sanative virtue in his hand ; and supposes it might be conferred upon him, as a distinguishing grace, on account of the regenerate and confirm'd state of piety which he seem'd to be in. But, however that matter might be, it can be of no service in the present case, because his cures were supposed to be performed by the touch, and I have proved before that hers are not so.

But, after all, why may we not suppose her endowed with this gift of healing, upon account of preserving her virginity to an advanced age ? There are some persons weak enough to think so. And I remember a pretty curious receipt for the king's evil in Mr. Scot's "Discovery of Witchcraft," which seems to favour such an opinion. The receipt is : "Let a virgin fasting lay her hand upon the sore, and say, 'Apollo denieth that the heat of the plague can increase, where a naked virgin quencheth it,' and spet three times upon it." But it is observable here, that the virgin is to be naked, and probably younger than our doctress. And yet I can hardly think that virginity has any such virtue annex'd to it : for if that were so, what a rare number of doctresses, both old and young, should we have in every town !

It is now, I hope, sufficiently proved that the cures, said to be wrought by this old woman, are neither natural nor supernatural effects. The consequence, I am afraid, will be that then they are none at all. And I cannot help it : for I never heard of a third sort really distinct from those mentioned. That this, in short, is the truth of the case, I am fully convinced upon good grounds and a careful enquiry ; insomuch that I dare challenge her warmest advocates to produce a single instance of a cure, that can be fairly proved to be wrought by her means.

Witchcraft in Herts (the Witch of Tring).

[1751, p. 186.]

At Tring, in Hertfordshire, one B—d—d, a publican, giving out that he was bewitched by one Osborne and his wife, harmless people above 70, had it cried at several market towns, that they were to be tried by ducking this day, which occasion'd a vast concourse. The parish officers having removed the old couple from the workhouse into the church for security, the mob missing them broke the workhouse windows, pulled down the pales, and demolished part of the house ; and seizing the governor, threatened to drown him and fire the town, having straw in their hands for that purpose. The poor wretches were at length for public safety delivered up, stript stark naked by the mob, their thumbs tied to their toes, then dragged two miles, and thrown into a muddy stream ; after much ducking and ill

usage, the old woman was thrown quite naked on the bank, almost choked with mud, and expired in a few minutes, being kick'd and beat with sticks, even after she was dead; and the man lies dangerously ill of his bruises; to add to the barbarity, they put the dead witch (as they called her) in bed with her husband, and tied them together. The coroner's inquest have since brought in their verdict wilful murder against Thomas Mason, Wm. Myatt, Rich. Grice, Rich. Wadley, James Proudham, John Sprouting, John May, Adam Curling, Francis Meadows, and 20 others, names unknown. The poor man is likewise dead of the cruel treatment he receiv'd.

[1751, p. 198.]

Tring, May 2.

Tho' your account of the riot and murder that lately happened in this place (see p. 186) is in general true, yet several names were mistaken, and some circumstances omitted; these I have corrected and supplied; and added some account of the incidents which for several years past have gradually been tending to produce this unhappy event: A little before the defeat of the Scotch in the late rebellion, the old woman Osborne came to one Butterfield, who then kept a dairy at Gubblecot, and begged for some buttermilk, but Butterfield told her with great brutality that he had not enough for his hogs; this provoked the old woman, who went away, telling him that the Pretender would have him and his hogs too. Soon afterwards several of Butterfield's calves became distemper'd; upon which some ignorant people, who had been told the story of the buttermilk, gave out that they were bewitched by old mother Osborne; and Butterfield himself, who had now left his dairy, and taken the public-house by the brook of Gubblecot, having been lately, as he had been many years before at times, troubled with fits, Mother Osborne was said to be the cause; he was persuaded that the doctors could do him no good, and was advised to send for an old woman out of Northamptonshire, who was famous for curing diseases that were produced by witchcraft. This sagacious person was accordingly sent for and came; she confirmed the ridiculous opinion that had been propagated of Butterfield's disorder, and ordered 6 men to watch his house day and night with staves, pitchforks, and other weapons, at the same time hanging something about their necks, which, she said, was a charm that would secure them from being bewitched themselves. However, these extraordinary proceedings produced no considerable effects, nor drew the attention of the place upon them, till some persons, in order to bring a large company together, with a lucrative view, ordered by anonymous letters that public notice should be given at Winslow, Leighton, and Hempstead, by the cryer, that witches were to be tried by ducking at Longmarston on the 22d of April. The consequences were as you have related them, except that no person has yet been committed on the coroner's inquest except one Thomas Colley,

chimneysweeper ; but several of the ringleaders in the riot are known, some of whom live very remote, and no expense or diligence will be spared to bring them to justice. [See note, p. 45.]

Witchcraft in Lancashire.

[1751, pp. 269, 270.]

The murders lately committed at Tring, of which you have given us several new particulars in page 198 of your last magazine, have revived the controversy concerning the reality of witchcraft and enchantment, which appeared to have been determined in the negative by the general consent, to which the sanction of the legislature has been lately added by a repeal of the statute of James I. against witchcraft. It may therefore afford some entertainment to your readers to show how much opinion has differed with respect to this subject within little more than a century, by publishing the remarkable case of the E. of Derby from the chronicle, in which some of the wisest and most learned persons of the time appear to have believed his disorder to proceed from a preternatural cause. His lordship's case, I think, is uncommon, and as it is related very circumstantially, this extract will not be without use to your medical readers, and perhaps some of them may send you their thoughts upon it.

I am, etc.

An. Reg. Eliz. 36, 1594, the 16th of April, Ferdinando Earl of Derby deceased at Latham, whose strange sickness and death, gathered by those who were present with him at the time thereof, was such as followeth : His apparent diseases were, vomiting of sower or rustie matter with blood, the yellow jaundies, melting of his fat, swelling and hardness of his spleen, a vehement hickcough, and four days before he died stopping of his water. The causes of all his diseases were thought by the physicians to be partly a surfeit, and partly a most violent distempering himself with vehement exercise, taken four days together in the Easter week.

The 5th of April, about six o'clock at night, he fell sick at Luowsby, where he vomited thrice.

The 6th he returned to Latham, and feeling his health to sink more and more, sent to Chester for a doctor of physick.

The 7th, before the coming of the doctor, he had cast seven times, the colour of his vomits like to sooty or rusty iron, the substance very gross and fattie, the quantity about seven pints, the smell not without offence ; his waters were in colour, smell and substance not unlike his vomits. The same night he took a glyster to draw the course of the humours downwards, which wrought five times and gave some ease.

The 8th he took a gentle infusion of rhubarb and manna in a draught of chicken-broth, which wrought very well nine times.

The 9th, because of his continual bleeding by mouth with his vomits, he was instantly intreated to be let blood, to divert and stay the course thereof, but he could by no means be perswaded thereunto, wherefore that day only fomentations and oils and plasters were outwardly applied to stay and comfort his stomach.

The 10th he took one other glyster, which wrought well six times.

The 11th he took one other purge, which wrought with great ease nine times upon the humours. The same night he took a little diascordium, with the syrup of lemons and scabious water, which somewhat stayed his stomach and gave him some rest.

The 12th, because his vomiting continued still, he was moved to take a vomit, that thereby the bottom of his stomach might be scoured and cleansed from so vile and loathsome matter wherewith he was troubled ; but by no perswasion would he yield thereunto, notwithstanding the same day he took a medicine to procure sweat, but prevailed not. The very same night his water stopp'd upon a sudden, to the astonishment of all.

The 13th all means were offered to provoke water, as glyster, drinks, plasters, fomentations, oils, pultises, stirrings, but nothing happily succeeded.

The 14th and 15th was used an instrument called a catheter, which being convey'd into his bladder was strongly sucked by the surgeon, but no water followed.

The 16th, about five o'clock at night, he most devoutly yielded his soul to God.

In all the time of his sickness he often took Bezoar stone and Unicorn's horn, his pulse were ever good, his strength indifferent, the number of vomits were 52, and of his stools 29 ; his physicians were Dr. Canon, Dr. Joyner, Dr. Bate, and Dr. Case.

A true Report of such Reasons and Conjectures as caused many learned men to suppose him to be bewitched.

The first of April, before his honour fell sick, a woman offered unto him a supplication or petition, wherein her request was, that it would please him to give or assign her a dwelling-place near unto himself, that she might from time to time reveal unto him such things with speed which God revealed unto her for his good. This petition was thought vain, therefore refused.

On the fourth of April he dreamed that his lady was most dangerously sick to death, and in his sleep being sore troubled therewith, he wept, suddenly cried out, and started from his bed, called for help, and sought about the chamber betwixt sleeping and waking, but being fully awaked, was comforted because he found her well. Here we

omit strange dreams or divinations of divers great men, which happened before or about the time of his sickness.

On the 5th of April, in his chamber at Kronstey about six o'clock at night there appeared suddenly a tall man with a ghastly and threatening countenance, who twice or thrice seemed to cross him as he was passing thro' the chamber, and when he came to the same part of the chamber where this shadow appeared, he presently fell sick, and there vomited thrice. And yet Goborne, one of his secretaries attending then upon him, saw nothing, which more amazed him. The same night he dreamed he was in fighting twice or thrice stabbed to the heart, also wounded in many other places of his body.

The 10th of April about midnight was found in his bedchamber by one Master Halsall, an image of wax with hair, like unto the hair of his honour's head, twisted through the belly thereof from the navel to the secrets. This image was spotted, as Master Halsall reported to Master Smyth, one of his secretaries, a day before any pain grew, and spots appeared on his sides and belly. This image was hastily cast into the fire by Mr. Halsall before it was viewed, because he thought by burning thereof, as he said, he should relieve his lord from witchcraft, and burn the witch who so much tormented his lord, but it fell out contrary to his love and affection, for after the melting thereof he more and more declined.

The 12th of April one Jane a witch demanded of Mr. Goborne whether his honour felt no pain in his lower parts, and whether he made water as yet or no; and at that very time his water utterly stopped, and so remained till he died.

Sir Edward Filton, who with other justices examined certain witches, reporteth that one of them being bidden to say the Lord's prayer, said it well; but being conjured in the name of Jesus that if she had bewitched his honour she should not be able to say the same, she never could repeat that petition "Forgive us our trespasses," no not altho' it was repeated unto her. [See *ante*, p. 240.]

A homely woman about the age of 50 was found mumbling in a corner of his honour's chamber, but what God knoweth.

This wise woman (as they termed her) seemed often to ease his honour both of his vomiting and hickcough, but so it fell out, which was strange, that when so long as he was eased the woman herself was troubled most vehemently in the same manner, the matter which she vomited being like also unto that which passed from him. But at last when this woman was espied by one of the doctors tempering and blessing (after her manner) the juice of certain herbs, her pot whereinto she strained the juice, was tumbled down by the same doctor, she rated out of the chamber, notwithstanding she did still say that she would not cease to ease him, altho' she could not perfectly help him, because he was so strangely bewitched. All physic

wrought very well, yet he had none or little ease thereby, his diseases were many, and his vomits, with stopping his water grievous, yet ever his pulse remained as good and perfect as ever it did in time of his best health, till one quarter of an hour before he died.

He himself in all the time of his sickness cried out that the doctors laboured in vain, because he was certainly bewitched. He fell twice into a trance, not able to move head, hand, or foot, when he would have taken physick to do him good. In the end he cried out against all witches and witchcraft, reposing his only hope of salvation upon the merits of Christ Jesus his Saviour.

One excellent speech among many cannot be omitted in the time of his sickness, especially the day before he departed, at which time he desired one of his doctors whom he especially loved to persuade him no longer to live, because, saith he, although out of thy love thou wouldst stir up hopes of life, and dost employ all thy wit, art, and travel to that end; yet knowing for a certainty that I must now die, I pray thee cease, for I am resolved presently to die, and to take away with me only one part of my arms, I mean the eagle's wings, so will I fly swiftly into the bosom of Christ my only Saviour, and with that he sent for his lady, and gave her his last farewell, desiring her to take away and love his doctor, and also to give him some jewel, with his armes and name, that he might be remembered; which thing immediately after his death was most honourably performed. His spiritual physicians were the Bishop of Chester and Mr. Lee his chaplain.

Witchcraft in Leicestershire.

[1804, *Part II.*, p. 909.]

On the monument of Francis, sixth Earl of Rutland, in Bottesford Church, Leicestershire, it is recorded, that by his second lady he had "two sons, both which died in their infancy by wicked practices and sorcery."

The circumstances which gave rise to this supposition were briefly these. "Joan Flower and her two daughters, Margaretta and Philippa, servants at Belvoir Castle, were dismissed for neglect of business, and various misdemeanours. This excited their revenge against the family; they therefore made use of all the enchantments, spells, and charms that were at that time supposed to answer their malicious purposes. Henry, the eldest of the sons, died soon after their dismissal; notwithstanding which, no suspicion of witchcraft arose till five years afterward; when the woman, and her two daughters, who are said to have entered into a formal contract with the devil, and to have become 'devils incarnate themselves,' were accused of murdering Henry Lord Ross by witchcraft, and torturing the Lord Francis, his brother, and the Lady Catherine his sister.

Being apprehended five years after the supposed fact, after various examinations before Francis Lord Willoughby of Eresby, Sir George Manners, Sir William Pelham, Sir Henry Hastings, Knight, and Samuel Fleming, D.D., Rector of Bottesford, and other his Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the said parts of the county, they were committed to Lincoln gaol.

"Joan Flower died at Ancaster in her way thither, by wishing the bread and butter she ate might choak her if she was guilty. The two daughters were tried before Sir Henry Hobart, Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, and Sir Edward Bromley, one of the Barons of the Exchequer; confessed their guilt, and were executed at Lincoln, March 11, 1618-19."

However we may deplore the ignorance of the times, these unhappy women could not be said to be innocent; as, from the depositions of others, and their own examinations and confessions, there could be no doubt of their intentional guilt. In short, they believed themselves witches. Many of the evidences in the different examinations concerning the witchcraft were of Bottesford, and are in the register of that time, some of their descendants being yet living. Their case was printed 1618, 4to.; and soon after was published "*The wonderful Discoverie of the Witchcrafts of Margaret and Phillip Flower, Daughters of Joan Flower, neere Bever Castle; executed at Lincoln, March 11, 1618, who were specially arraigned and condemned before Sir Henry Hobart, and Sir Edward Bromley, Judges of Assize, for confessing themselves Actors in the Destruction of Henry Lord Rosse, with their damnable Practices against others the Children of the Right Honourable Francis Earl of Rutland. Together with the severall Examinations and Confessions of Anne Baker [of Bottesford, spinster], Joan Willimot [of Gowby, widow], and Ellen Greene [of Malherne], Witches in Leicestershire. Printed at London, by G. Eld, for I. Barnes dwelling in the Long Walke, neere Christ Church, 1619,*" 4to.

It is preserved at large in Mr. Nichols's "*History of Leicestershire*," vol. ii., Appendix, p. 69; and is a most striking proof of the then prevalent opinion on the subject of witchcraft. The examinations were taken by Magistrates of the first consequence in the neighbourhood.

In 1621 appeared, "*Strange and wonderful Witchcrafts: discovering the damnable Practices of seven Witches against the Lives of certain noble Personages, and others of this Kingdom; with an approved Trial how to find out either Witch or any Apprentice to Witchcraft.*" See also Turner's "*History of Remarkable Providences*," etc.

The calamities in the earl's family are said to have occasioned the famous Act of Parliament in that reign against sorcery and other diabolical practices, which was lately repealed. Howel tells us, in

his "Letters," vol. i., p. 58, "that King James, a great while, was loth to believe there were witches; but that which happened to my lord Francis of Rutland's children convinced him." This is contradictory to the tenor of the "Dæmonologia," which was published long before.

Yours, etc., M. GREEN.

Witchcraft in Somersetshire.

[1837, Part II., pp. 256, 257.]

The following are Copies of Depositions as to certain charges of witchcraft, made in the county of Somerset, in the year 1664. The originals appear to have been wholly written by the magistrate before whom they were sworn.*

Yours, etc., W. L. W.

Somerset. Walter Thicke, of Bayford, in the county afores^d, yeoman, examined the 11 March, 1664, before Robert Stunt, esq., one c^t.

Sayth, That about this tyme twelvemoneth hee had two oxen dyed suddenly, one of them in the plowe, and when they had opened the s^d oxe they found noe signes of sicknesse about him, the other dyed in a strange manner; and this exam^t's neybour conceivd the said oxe to bee bewitched; and sth that hee lost a cowe, and all dyed in 2 or 3 weekes; and since the s^d Elizabeth Styles was taken up, the s^d Styles hath confessed to this exam^t that shee (being angry with him for denyeing her some pease) sett a curse uppon the s^d catle, and by that meanes they dyed, and desired this exam^t to forgive her for it. And this ex^t then asked the s^d Styles why shee had not hurt his person? shee replied, that shee had noe power to doe it.

WALTER THICK.

Taken uppon oath before me ROBT. STUNT.

Elizabeth Foarwood, of Bayford, in the county affoars^d, examined the 11 day of March, 1664, before Robert Stunt, one of his Ma^t's justices c^t.

Sayeth, That she, together with Katherine Whyte, Mary Day, Bridgett Prankard, and Mary Boulster did, a little after Christmas last, search Elizabeth Style, and in her pole finde a little rysing or nobb of flesh, w^{ch} felt hard like a kernell of Beise, w^{ch} this exam^t suspectinge to bee an ill marke, did thrust a pinn into and then tooke it out, and after some short pauze, this exam^t did agen thrust in the pinn into the s^d place and through the flesh, and thear lefte the s^d pinn in the s^d place for some tyme that the other woemen might

[* An account of these proceedings was given *ante*, pp. 243-245; but as these are copies of the original depositions, it seems worth while printing this communication.]

allsoe see it, yet the s^d Style did neyther first nor at the second tyme make the least shewe that she felt the s^d prickinge of her flesh, whylest the s^d pinn was putt in, or taken out, nor did any bloud issue out of the s^d place. But this exam^t sayth that after, when the constable tould her hee would thrust in a pin to the s^d place, the s^d Style cryed out, "O Lord! doe you prick mee," when in truith noe body did then soe much as touch it, nor her, but only made a shew of touchinge her pole. And this exam^t sayth, that since the s^d Style was taken upp by the justice and examined before him, she confessed that her familiar did use to sucke her in the affoares^d place, in the shape of a flye, a great miller, or butter flye; and sayth, that the said Style did likewise confesse to this exam^t she had signed her covenant wth the Devell by a dropp of her bloud, and that she had promised the Devell to forsake God and Jesus Christe, and all the wayes of God; and the s^d Style sayd y^t she had more to say, but that she had not power to bringe it out; and farther sayth, that if she could speake wth her brother and sister at Shasbury, they could tell her of more witches than she knew, whoe had sealed but had not yet beene at any randvoes [rendezvous].—The marke of

ELIZABETH (E. F.) FOARWOODE.

Taken upon oath before mee ROBT. STUNT.

The examination of Nicolas Lambert, of Bayford, in the county of Somerset, yeom^r. Taken before me the 30 of January, 1664, upon oath.

Sayth, that the Monday after Xmasday, he was in the house of Richard Still, where his daughter Elizabeth was taken very ill, and had very strong fits on her, soe that though she was sate downe in a chayre, yet six people could not keepe and hold her downe in the chayre, and that when her fits came on her they were not able to rule her. But she would rayse up her chayre, though six men held the same; and being in her fits, she would poynt with her handes where her torm^t was, and this ex^t and the rest lookeing where she poynted, saw as it were thornes, and the prickes of thornes, in her handes, hand wrests, and other places. And this ex^t farther sayth, that he, together wth William Thicke and W^m. Read, being ordered by Francis White, the tythingman of Bayford, to watch Elizabeth Style, who on Thursday night last in the evening committed to the sayd tythingman by the justice, upon suspicion of witchcraft; and this examin^t reading in the Practice of Piety about 3 of y^e clocke in the morning, Elizabeth Style being in the same room by the fire, there came from the head of the s^d Eliz. Style a glittering and bright fly, about an inch in length, and soe much in breadth, which sayd fly pitched on a planke in the chimney and vanished away. This ex^t still kept on reading, and in less than a quarter of an hour there appeared two flyes more of a lesse size, and of another colour, and

seemed to strike at this exam^{ts} hand, in which he held the sayd booke, but missed his hand, the one going over and the other under at one and the same tyme. The exam^t kept on reading, and at length being somewhat startled at the strang appearances of the sayd flyes, this exam^t tould the sayd Style, but she would make noe answer, and this exam^t looking stedfast in her, did perceive her countenance to change and to be very blacke and ghastly, and the fire at the same tyme to change its colour, where upon this exam^t began to be sharp wth the sayd Style, and tould her that her familiar was now about her; whereupon this ex^t and the rest that were wth him searched her, and looked in her pole, where they perceived her hayre to whe'ver,* and shake very strangely; and there found a fly like a millard; which on a sudden rushed out and pitched on the table board, and suddenly vanished away. Then this exam^t and the rest with him looked again in her pole, w^{ch} was not as before, but was redde and like rawe meate. This exam^t asked Style-what it was that went out of her pole; the sayd Style said it was a butterfly, and asked why they had not catched it; and in some short tyme after they looked agen in her pole, and then it was of its former colour. And this exam^t demanding againe what that fly was that rushed out of her pole, and that made her pole soe red and raw, she then confessed that it was her familiar, and that she felt it to tickle in her pole at that time, and that was the usual tyme when the familiar came to her, and then the sayd Eliza. Style confessed she had made a covenant wth the devill; and that she had signed it with her blood, which the devill had out of her finger next her little finger on her right hand. And that a man in blacke did usually appear to the sayd Eliz. Style, Alice Duke, and Anne Bushop, when they did meet at their randevouse, which sayd man in blacke was the devill as she thought, and that the man in blacke brought the picture of Richard Stile's daughter in wax; and the sayd Elizabeth Style confessed that she put a thorn into the handwrest of the sayd picture, and that the man in blacke put in more, and every one stuck in some.

W^m. Thick and W^m. Read, of Bayford, say upon their oathes that the examination above of Nicholas Lambert is truth.

ROBT. HUNT.

Witchcraft in Suffolk.

[1837, *Part I.*, pp. 55-57.]

The county of Suffolk was remarkable for the number of Witches which were known to practise their diabolical arts in it. Baxter says he knew more than a hundred at one time. The famous trial of Sir Matthew Hale, at Lowestoft, is well known. The present case is found in a copy of Baxter's "World of Spirits," and was probably preserved for another edition which did not appear. It is directed to him.

* Waver?

Worthy Sir,—Your last, of the 6th of July, I duly received, and since then I have inquired further into the business of the possession of Magdalen Holyday, maid-servant to the Parson of Saxmundham, Suffolk, as you desired ; you saying it would be of use to your forthcoming volume, and of which case I informed you in a letter dated Nov. 1, 1685, and forwarded to you by the Ipswich waggon to the Ram Inn, Smithfield. Now, being myself lately on a visit to my sister's nephew in these parts, a painstaking, honest man, living at Freston, under the Lord Stafford, which village is near to the sea, and not far from the said town of Saxmundham, I have made due and diligent enquiry thereupon in answer to your pressing entreaties, that I would enrich your next work on Apparitions and Witchcrafts with this case ; I here, forthwith, send it to you, as I have received it from the mouths of many sober, creditable persons in these parts.

Witness my hand,

TOBIAS GILBERT, Cordwainer.

No. 2, Eastcheap, now dwelling at Freston, aforesaid.

"Magdalen Holyday, spinster, aged eighteen years, the daughter of poor honest persons, Phineas and Martha Holyday, of the parish of Rendham, near Framlingham (as may be seen by the register of the said parish), was servant-maid to Mr. Simon Jones, minister of the parish of Saxmundham, with whom she had dwelt for the space of three years and upwards, and was esteemed by all the neighbours as a civil, well-behaved young woman, of good conduct above her years ; very decent and frugal in her apparel, modest in her behaviour ; sweet and civil in her speech, and painstaking in her religion ; so that she was well respected of all in the said parish, young and old. She was also a very fair and comely person, save only a defect in the colour of her hair, of moderate stature and a cheerful disposition : nor was any reproach ever thrown upon her, save that some few of the Gospellers (a party that sprang up in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and doth now continue to the great division of the one Catholic Church,) would taunt her, that being handmaid to a Minister of the Church, she would frequent wakes and fairs at Whitsuntide, and saint days and holy days ; but they could not throw anything in her teeth which they would, as she always went in company with her brother, aunts, or other sober people of good repute, who could keep scandal from her door. Her family did not like Oliver Cromwell, nor any of his ordinances, but were true and faithful to King Charles, of blessed memory, though they were but poor folk. Now Magdalen Holyday had in her youth been touched of the King for the evil, when he came into the Associated Counties ; but since that she had always preserved her health, so that the rose-blush in her cheek, and the milky snow on her forehead were known to all. But to come to my story. It happened on Monday, in Lammas, the year 1672,

about noon, as she was carrying in dinner, no one in the parlour, save the parson, his wife, and their eldest daughter, Rebecca, then about to be married to a worthy and painstaking Gospel Minister, then living at the parish of Yoxford, in the said county, that on a sudden, just as she had placed a suet dumpling on the board, she uttered a loud shriek, as if she were distraught, and stooping down, as in great pain, said she felt a pricking as of a large Pin in the upper part of her leg, but she did not think that any such thing could be there. Yet on ungartering her hose, she felt a pin had got there, within the skin, yet not drawing blood nor breaking the skin, nor making any hole or sign, and she could hardly feel the head of it with her finger, and from that time it continued tormenting her with violent and retching pains all the day and night; and this continuing and nothing assuaged, Mistress Jones, by advice of the minister, sent for the assistance of two able apothecaries (*medica*), then dwelling in the said town; one a chirurgeon of great repute, who had studied under the famous Hondius at Frankfort; the other a real son of Galen; who, on examining the part, and above and below at sufficient distance, both declared they could see neither 'volva, nec vestigium' of the said pin; but on her constant and confident assertion that there was a pin, though it had now time to work itself deeper into the flesh, like an insidious enemy, they made an incision, but could find none, only the maid asserted that a few days before, an old woman came to the door and begged a pin of her, and she not giving her one, the said woman muttered something, but she did not suspect her. And now it was time these noted leeches should do something for this afflicted person; for now she lies in ceaseless torment, both by night and by day, for if she slept her sleep was troubled with dreams and wicked apparitions: sometimes she saw something like a mole run into her bed, sometimes she saw a naked arm held over her, and so was this poor maid thus tormented by evil spirits in spite of all godly prayers and ringing of church bells, etc. But now the doctors took her in hand, their names, Anthony Smith, Gent., and Samuel Kingston, chirurgeon to Sir John Rouse, of Henham, Knt., having taken down the deposition of the said Magdalen Holyday before Mr. Pacey, a pious Justice of the Peace, living at Marlesford in the said county, upon oath; they then gave to the said M. H. the following medicines:—Imprimis, a decoction—*exfuga Dæmonum*—of southern wood, mugwort vervain, of which they formed a drink according to Heuftius 'Medical Epistles,' lib. xii., sect. iv., also following Variola, a physician, of great experience at the court of the Emperor. They also anointed the part with the following embrocation:—Dog's grease well mixed, four ounces; bear's fat, two ounces; eight ounces of capon's grease; four and twenty slips of misletoe, cut in pieces and powdered small with gum of Venice turpentine, put close into a phial, and exposed for nine days to the sun, till it formed into a green balsam,

with which the said parts were daily anointed for the space of three weeks' time, during which time, instead of amendment, the poor patient daily got worse, and vomited, not without constant shrieks or grunting, the following substances: paring of nails, bits of spoons, pieces of brass (triangular), crooked pins, bodkins, lumps of red hair, egg-shells broken, parchment shavings, a hen's bone of the leg, one thousand two hundred worms, pieces of glass, bones like the great teeth of a horse, aluminous matter, sal petri (not thoroughly prepared), till at length relief was found, when well nigh given up, when she brought up with violent retching, 'a whole row of pins stuck on blew paper!' After that, these sons of Æsculapius joyfully perceived that their potent drugs had wrought the designed cure—they gave her comfort, that she had subdued her bitter foe, nor up to the present time has she ever been afflicted in any way; but, having married an honest, poor man, though well to do in the world, being steward to Sir John Heveningham, she has borne him four healthy children, and is likely to cover his house with more sweet olive branches from her fruitful orchard. Whether this punishment was inflicted upon her by the said old woman, an emissary of Satan, or whether it was meant wholesomely to rebuke her for frequenting wakes, may-dances, and candlemas fairs, and such like pastimes, still to me remains in much doubt. 'Non possum solvere nodum.'

Sir, your thankful servant, T. G.

Freston Parish, nigh to Saxmondham, sent by the carrier.

P.S.—I hear the physicians followed up their first medicine with castory, and rad. ostrutii, and sem. dauci, on Forestius, his recommendation.

WITCHCRAFT IN BENHALL, SUFFOLK.

[1835, *Part I.*, p. 576.]

The following curious letter is copied from a manuscript preserved in the British Museum (MS. Harl. 1686):

From Mr. Manning, Dissenting Teacher at Halstead, in Essex, to J. Morley, Esq., Halstead.

"SIR,

"Halstead, August 2, 1732.

"The narrative wh^h I gave you in relation to witchcraft, and which you are pleased to lay your commands upon me to repeat, is as follows: There was one Master Collete, a smith by trade, of Haveningham, in the County of Suffolk, formerly servant in Sir John Duke's family, in Benhall, in Suffolk, who, as 'twas customary with him, assisting the maide to churne, and not being able (as the phrase is) to make the butter come, threw a hot iron into the churn, under the notion of witchcraft in the case, upon which a poore labourer, then

employed in carrying of dung in the yard, cried out in a terrible manner: 'They have killed me; they have killed me;' still keeping his hand upon his back, intimating where the pain was, and died upon the spot.

"Mr. Collett, with the rest of the servants then present, took off the poor man's clothes, and found to their great surprise, the mark of the iron that was heated and thrown into the churn, deeply impressed upon his back. This account I had from Mr. Collett's own mouth, who being a man of unblemished character, I verily believe to be matter of fact.—I am, Sir, your obliged humble servant,

"SAM. MANNING."

Witchcraft in Surrey.

THE WITCHES' CAULDRON.

[1832, *Part I.*, p. 69.]

In the vestry of Frensham Church, Surrey, hangs a huge cauldron, hammered out of a single piece of copper, supposed by Salmon to be a remain of the antient parochial hospitality at the wedding of poor maids. Aubrey supposes it to have been used for the Church Ales. Tradition reports it to have been brought from Borough Hill, about a mile hence; if anyone went to borrow any thing, he might have it for a year or longer, provided he kept his word as to the return. On this hill lies a great stone, about six feet long: the party went to this stone, knocked at it, declared what was desired, and when they would return it; and a voice answered appointing a time when they would find the article wanted. This kettle, with the trivet, it is said, was so borrowed, but not returned at the time fixed; and though afterwards carried, it would not be received, and all subsequent applications have been fruitless. Another tradition ascribes the place whence it was borrowed to have been the neighbouring cave, called Mother Ludlow's Hole.—Tymm's *Family Topographer*, Vol. I. [See Note 46.]

Witchcraft in Wiltshire.

[1759, p. 93.]

One Susanna Hannokes, an elderly woman, of Wingrove, near Aylesbury, was accused by a neighbour for bewitching her spinning-wheel, so that she could not make it go round, and offered to make oath of it before a magistrate; on which the husband, in order to justify his wife, insisted on her being tried by the church Bible, and that the accuser should be present. Accordingly, she was conducted to the parish church, where she was *stript* of all her *cloaths* to her shift and under-coat, and weighed against the Bible; when, to the no

small mortification of her accuser, she outweighed it, and was honourably acquitted of the charge.

DEMONOLOGY—MALMESBURY.

[1832, *Part I.*, pp. 405-410.]

I send you a copy of a manuscript containing some curious particulars upon the subject of demonology. It presents a melancholy picture of the ignorance that once prevailed, and of the debased state to which it is possible that the human mind may be reduced. The belief in witchcraft seems to have been particularly prevalent in the county of Wilts, if we may judge from the account of the drummer of Tedworth in Glanville, and from the facts detailed in this manuscript. His sapient Majesty King James was monstrously puzzled to find an answer for the difficult question, "why Sathan in matters of witchcraft had more frequent dealings with antient gentlewomen than with young ones?" But now Satan, it should seem, in these matters as in many others, is grown wiser than of yore. Many poor men, to their grievous costs, find that Satan in this respect hath quite as frequent dealings with young gentlewomen as with ancient ones. To be old, wrinkled, and poor, was quite sufficient to stamp any unfortunate female as a witch. Experience, or the evidence of their own senses, appear to have had no influence on the judgment of witnesses, juries, or judges. They saw the accused standing at the bar, completely in their power, offering no resistance, and incapable of escaping from their injustice; yet, notwithstanding this, they considered the mutterings of a wayward, sullen boy, and the ravings of delirium, sufficient evidences of the wretched victim's guilt, and without the slightest remorse consigned her to an ignominious death. The difficulty as to why Satan should forsake his followers in the hour of their greatest need, was accounted for by supposing that seeing them devoted to a miserable end, he then forsook them, having gained his object, their eternal perdition. Well may we exclaim, with the philosophic poet of antiquity—

"Tantum Religio potuit suadere malorum."

Yours, etc., B. C. T.

Ash-Wednesday, 1685-6.

"MOST HONOURED AND REVEREND S^r,

"By the date of a letter that will be delivered to yourself here-with, you will see that I designed earliyer to have addressed myself to you in reference to the representing the papers to yourself, which are much more imperfect than I hoped they would have been, which happens for that I am very little master of myne own time; even this very day in which I am fasting even from a bit of bread at or after 5 of the clock after noone, I have had people with me (and have some

yet) uppon justice business, ever since I did rise in the morning, which hinders me from giving you the accompt of many occurrences very extraordinary. Amongst which is a relation of a rat which followed and ever would be with that worthy gentleman Sr Edward Norris,* then residing in Ireland; an apparition to Mr. William Howard, father of Mr. Craven Howard, presumptive heyre to the Earle of Berkshire; and several relations of that kind; as also specimens of several observations of animals and phænomena of meteors, especially of some lately observed heere and neere this place by myself and others. Reverend Sr, I have so much certaynty of your candour, that I can beleieve no other, but that you will be pleased to suspend your judgment of these papers and my purpose, until I have the happiness to attend you at Cambridge, which, God willing, shall be as soone as the wayes are good and our sessions past. I doubt not but you will thinck it very strange that I name not the justices for this county in the relation of those miserable women's tryals at Malmesbury, in which to you I acknowledge I myself was principally engaged, so that I being the last who came thither, even when the mittimus was made for 13, 12 women and one man, I brought it to pass, that but three of those were committed, of which 2 were convict and executed. I know you will approve the methodes I persuaded the other justices to use, which were not to persuade any one of the accused to confesse, much lesse to menace any of them; to take nothing for evidence which was sayd by a boy of 12 years old, in his fitts of being possessed, as was supposed, all which is set forth in the relation. The true reason why I name not myselfe is, for that it pleased God that, although a sinful man, but careful not to doe aught but what was directly next for me to doe in reference to the circumstances I was under then, and of firme faith as I hope something were done by my head, which were not only mervaylous to others but to myself also, and in the sight of a cloud of witnesses now living, and those not meane or unadvised people, but of prudent, sober, and subtle persons, such as Captain Robert Young, now chiefe magistrate of Malmesbury, called there alderman, and several others of Malmesbury, and other neighbouring places. I also advised to procure two of the ablest ministers, and of best report in all those parts, to speak generally with the women, and to discover, if they could, whether there was any practice in the case, or any madness, deep melancholly, or hatred of life in *Tilling*, who confessed. The business was long, I having employed twenty days at least about the examinations; in all which time the women were in their owne houses, with slender guards, but the women before for much the more part were at liberty.

I acknowledge with wonder sufficient I have heard severall persons, very learned otherwyse, affirme there were not, neyther could be, any

* Some curious traditionary stories connected with this tale are still related to the visitors of Mallow Castle in Ireland; now the seat of C. D. O. Jephson, Esq., M.P.

witches ; amongst others, Doctor Harvey* was induced by a very weake experiment to be of that mind ; I was very familiarly acquainted with him, and was often abroad with him, and had severall discourses with him of things in his faculty, but principally about natural philosophy, I agreeing with him for much the more part. I once asked him what his opinion was concerning witchcraft ; whether there was any such thing. Hee told mee he believed there was not. I asked him what induced him to be of that opinion. He told me that when he was at Newmercat with the King,† he heard there was a woman who dwelt at a lone house on the borders of the heath who was reputed a witch ; that he went alone to her, and found her alone at home, alighted, and went into the house to her. Hee said shee was very distrustful at first ; but when hee told her he was a vizard, and came purposely to converse with her in their common trade, then shee easily believed him ; for, say'd hee to mee, " You know I have a very magicall face," and looking upon mee, and gathering upp his face, I indeed thought hee had.

Dr. Harvey asked where her familiar was, and desired to see him. Shee immediately fetched a little milk, and put it in a flat dish, and went to a chest and chucked with her mouth, as toades doe when they call one another ; and immediately a toad came from under the chest, and drunk some of the milke. He sayd it was enough, and caused her to take awaye the dish before the toad had done, and asked the woman whether she had any ale to sell, for they, beinge brother and sister, must drink together. She sayd there was ale to be sold about halfe a mile thence ; hee desired her to goe to fetch some, whilst he stayed, and gave her a shilling ; away she went for the ale. Hee tooke milke, when she was a goode waye on her way, went to the chest, chucked as shee did, the toad came out. His *tongues*‡ were ready in his hand, he caught up the toad in them ; his dissecting knife was ready alsoe, he opened the toades belly, out came the milk. Hee examin'd the toades entrayles, heart, and lungs, and it no ways differed from other toades, of which hee had disected many of, ergo it was a playne, naturall toad. The old woman was melancholly and poore ; found the toad some evening abroad eating spiders, for hungry toades will eat spiders and other reptiles or insects ; carried it home, made it tame by feeding it, and so it became a spirit, and that spirit a familiar. From hence he concludes there are no witches very logistically ; his argument in effect is this :—A woman had a tame toade, which she believed to bee a spirit and her familiar ; the toad upon disection proved an arrant naturall toad, and had really eaten milk,

* Evidently from the context William Harvey, justly celebrated for his theory of the circulation of the blood. He was born in 1578, and died in 1658.

† No doubt the unfortunate Charles I., to whom Harvey was Physician in Ordinary.

‡ Tonges.

and not in appearance onely, therefore there are no witches. The good doctor, upon the woman's returne, who found him busy in observing what the toad would doe in the pickle hee had put him in, was in danger to have a more magical face than hee had before, and habit too; the woman let or rather threw downe the pitcher of ale, flew like a tigris at his face; 'twas well hee had nothing but bare bones and tough tanned skin, neyther hair nor bearde, and 'twas well his eyes were out of reach, well guarded with prominent bones, otherways it had gone ill with him; but for his short very short old black coat, that scaped not so well, that pay'd for killing the poor woman's divell. The doctor intreated fayrly, offered money, would have persuaded 'twas not a divell, but a meer toad. That way not prevayling, hee turned his tale, sayd hee was the King's phisitian, sent by the King to discover whether indeed shee was a witch; if a witch, to have her apprehended; if not, to undeceive her, if hee could. The name of the King, and the word apprehending, brought her into a better temper; and after having been called 1000 old cheating rogues, and as many times freely given to the divell, the doctor got away; tolde the Kinge, whose leave he had to go upon the expedition, the whole story, which was pleasant entertaynment for that good King at his dinner. I did know the doctor's temper well, and that it did not much concern me what opinion he was of in that poynt. I onely say'd, "I think I have heard their spirits have recourse to toades or other animalls (which the witches keep and feed) at set times, or where fore spirits are called upon extraordinary occasions, but doe not exert them constantly, for then the poor divells would have a very bad time of it." I am certayne this, for an argument against spirits or witchcraft, is the best and most experimentall I ever heard, and as logically managed as I ever expect to have any.—Pardon this long trouble, I beseech you, S^r, and bee pleased to beleieve there is no one honours you more than, Reverent S^r,

[no name.]

It is not possible as yet for me to set out all the charges against the persons I mention now who have suffered on the accompt of witches, there having been many convicted formerly before my time, and some since, of whom I onely can now give the names; such was John Barlowes wife, convicted of and executed for witchcraft about 55 year since. Alice Elger, widow, dwelling in Westport, became so audaciously obnoxious to the good inhabitation, there being none but martial law then, it was about 1643; Malmesbury then being in the hands of the armys ranged against the King; that the soldiers and some of the lowest of the people did in the mercat place use her very roughly, moved by an instant emergent, so that shee, perhaps to avoyd the like, went home and poysoned herselfe, as was then beleived, and was buried in a cross way as a felon of herself.

Orchard, widow, was beleevd to be a witch universally, and was very conversant with Alice Elgar, and thought to bee her confederate about 27 years since ; shee came to the house of Hugh Bartholomew, of Malmesbury, brewer, and finding his daughter Mary, since wife to Robert Web, not long since alderman of Malmesbury, now deceased, about the doore, Orchard asked her for some barme or yeast. The sayd Mary, apprehending harme from her, if she should give her any, refused her, and sayd there was none to spare. Orchard told her there were 40 hogsheads or barrels then working, but was told by the sayd Mary, there was none for her. She rejoyned, "Then you will give me none? 'twere better for you you had;" and went away muttering to her self. Immediately after shee was gone, a great cipress chest in which Mr. Bartholomew kept his money, being in the chamber over the roome where he and his company were, was lifted up and let fall, so that it shook the whole house ; immediately afterwards they heard great cracks, and the gingling of money, of which there was above 200*l.* as they thought, and as in truth it was. Mr. Bartholomew beleevd his chest had been broken, and his money or part of it lost, went not upp into the chamber, but followed Orchard towards her house, and being to passe thorow a large plat of ground, which is within the walls of the towne, where much timber was lay'd and sawyed out, hee asked the sawyers if they sawe Goody Orchard goe homewards? They say'd they did, that shee was gone to her house a little while before. Hee cominge to her house, and finding the door shut, and the window-boards down, knocked at the door and the windows but nobody answered ; although hee told her hee had six pence for her. A neybour's wife opened the door of her house, and seeing Mr. Bartholomew knocking at the doore, and calling Goody Orchard by her name, asked, laughing, whether her neybour Orchard had used or played any of her froliques with him? Hee answered she had, and that because she was refused barme at his house, she caused her spirits to breake his greate cyprus chest, and for ought he knew, to throwe about or carry away his money.

Goody Orchard, who it seems was harkening, hearing what hee say'd, speake as near as I can remember, for some are alive heard them, these words : "You lie, you old rogue ; your chest is not broken, the nayles are only drawn, and there is never a penny of your money gone." He being well pleased to heare it was no worse, went home, and taking company with him, went into the roome, where he found the pinns or nayles of the chest onely drawn, the money out of the bags, but none missing ; but the lock so filled with it, and some of the money in the lock so bent, that he was forced to cause a smith to take it off, and to pull it to peeces, to get out the money, and to fit it up for use. Immediately after Mr. Bartholomew was gone from Orchard's house, shee packed upp what shee thought fit to carry with her, and left the house and towne, and was not heard

of in 3 or 4 months ; and then that shee was in Salisbury Gaole, committed thither for bewitching a young mayde, a gardiner's daughter of Burbage, about 4 miles south or south east of Marleboro' ; the manner of it was thus : Early in the morning this goody Orchard came to the gardiner's house ; hee was one of those who kept great grounds of early pease, carrots, and turnips, for to serve mercats, and prayed his daughter, a young mayd of 17 or 18 years, then coming from fetching carrots to bee carried out to mercat, to give her some victuels. Shee, whose hands were sandy, answered, "By her throth shee would wash her hands, and cut something to eat herselfe, for shee was ready to faynting, having been from the first day light working hard, filting up and cleansing carrots, and that shee had done more than that idle old woman had done in a twelvemonth ; and after she had eaten a bit or two, shee would give her some victuels."

The mayd's father hearing her answer the woman as above, sayd to her, "Cut the poore woman some bread and cheese, and let her goe about her business." The mayd answered, "Let her staye ; I am so faynt, I can scarce stand on my leggs ; I will eat a bit or two, and give her some." There was a garden by the doore near the path to it, where were walks round a grasse plot, into which garden the woman stepped, and, neyther walking or running, she trotted about the garden in the walk ; and when she came round it, she trotted into the middle of the grass plot, and squatted downe there. This she did three times, muttering some words not understood by those present, and then trudged away as fast as shee could. The young mayd having water brought her, put her hands into it to wash them, which she had no sooner done, but her fingers were distorted in theyr joynts, one this way, another that way, and with such extreame torment, that shee cryed out as if one had been about to kill her, or shee had been killing, and say'd, that wicked old woman had bewitched her, and preyed her father to send after her, and bring her back. Many horses being ready to goe out with carrots to the mercats, men and labourers mounte, and some one way and some another pursued the woman, and the third day found her begging about twenty miles thence at Edington, in the mannour house, of which Mr. Leues,* a person not to bee mentioned without his due prayse of being both very prudent and very hospitable, dwells ; to him they brought the woman. Hee having heard the complaynt, and taken the information and examination, made a mittimus for her to Salisbury Goale ; but, on the request of the men who tooke her, hee suffered them to carry her back to Burbage, to the gardiner's house, to which they carried her, and found the mayd in a feaver, with the extreame torment of her fingers, and not having slept since it came upon her. When Orchard was brought to the mayd, the mayd charged her with bewitching her, and so did the rest of the persons there, and threatened her with hanging : but

* Qu. Leving.

Orchard stood stoutly in it, that she was not bewitched, but that she had washed her hands in unwholesome water, and that wholesome water would cure her; whereupon some of the same sort of water which she washed in before was brought, which Goody Orchard desiring to see, that she might judge whether it were wholesome or not, she put one of her fingers into it, and carried her finger so that shee made three circles in it contrary to the course of the sun, and then pronounced it wholesome water, and bid the mayd dip her hands in it, which the mayd doing, her fingers recovered their due posture, and the extreame paynes ceased, but the tone of the nerves being for the present lost, her fingers had no strength in them at the time of the tryal, and were not without some payne.

The woman was carried to Salisbury, and there convicted and executed; and, to prove her a witch, Mr. Bartholomew and divers of Malmesbury, that being discovered to be the place of her last abode, were bound to give evidence against her, which they did; for which, and for Mr. Bartholomew's being the cause of her flying from Malmesbury, those dire revenges were taken upon Mrs. Mary Webb, his daughter, who also had denyed the yeest. I have omitted, that when the hagg trotted about the garden, she muttered certayne words, some of which the witnesses thought to be ———.

[1832, *Part I.*, pp. 489-492.]

Jan. 16, 1685-6. The Alderman of Malmesbury, in Wiltshire, that being the title of the chiefe Magistrate of that auntient Borrow, sent to the Justices of the Peace of that subdivision of the County, to pray them to assist him in a discovery which was made of Witches by the voluntary confession of one Ann Tilling, widdowe, who had confessed to Mrs. Mary Webb, the wife of Mr. Robert Webb, since Alderman of that Burrow, that she Ann Tilling, — Peacock, and — Witchell, widow, sisters, had bewitched Thomas the son of the above-named Robert Webb and Mary his wife, which Mary was the daughter of Mr. Bartholomew, whos chest was broken as in the foregoing relation, so that Thomas Webb above-named had very grievous fitts of swooning, sometimes three or four times in a day, and that he seemed to bee possest with some foreigne power betwixt thos fitts, so that he would curse and sweare, tell what the persons suspected to have harmed him were doing or saying, and often speake to them as if they or some of them were present, although not visible to any person uppon the place.

The confession of Anne Tilling was made to Mrs. Mary Webb upon this motion. Mrs. Webb meeting casually with Ann Tilling, reproached her for that, ungratefully and without provocation, shee had joined with Peacock and Witchell to bewitch her son, who in his fitts complained of Tilling, Peacock, and Witchell, for tormenting him and doing him hurt severall ways. That her husband and shee (Mrs.

Webb) had ever been very good friends to Ann Tilling and her deceased husband, and had employed them in their work, when they wanted work, and had been many ways uppon several occasions bountiful and beneficial to them, even to the preventing of their utmost necessity; uppon which Ann Tilling fell downe on her knees, and beg'd Mrs. Webb's pardon, confessing she had been wrought on by Goody Peacock and Witchell, to agree that her son Thomas should be bewitched; for which shee was very sorry, and would do what shee could at any time to helpe him to come out of his fitts. The boy continuing to have his fitts, Mr. Webb complayned to the Alderman, who having apprehended Ann Tilling, sent to the Justices above-mentioned to have their assistance in the examinations of Tilling and the two others above-named. Ann Tilling confessed before the Alderman and 3 County Justices, that herselfe, persuaded by and joining with Peacock and Witchell, had harmed the boy, and caused those fitts, which, by the helpe of theyr spirits, they had brought upon him; and that, three witches being needful to doe things of that nature, Goody Clark being bedrid, soe that shee could not goe out with them, nor they have free recourse to her; they had taken her, Ann Tilling, into the first 3 in Goody Clark's place; that they had consultations often with other two threes, so that they were 9, about avenging themselves upon theyr enimys, and that the three threes had often mett since shee was admitted into the first 3; shee alsoe named 3 or 4 men and women confederates, but not frequently conversing with them. That when they mett altogether, it was late at night, in some one of their houses; and that there and then they did eate and drink all together, and consulted of their business, which was the avenging themselves uppon theyr enimys. Besides the three first uppon Tilling's confession, eleven persons, 2 men and nine women, were apprehended and examined, theyr examinations taken in writing, and mittimus making, and some made and signed, for sending them to the County Gaole. Whilst the clerks were finishing the mittimus, another Justice of the Peace arrived, who had not been forward, not being perhaps very credulous in matters of witchcraft, at least thinking that at Malmesbury they were rarer than they were thought to be. He was much caressed by the Alderman and the 3 Justices, who began to despair of his company at that time, and desired him to read the information and confession of Ann Tilling, and also the information of Thomas the son of Robert Webb, which having done, and seeinge 14 persons ready to be committed to the County Gaole, he was extremely concerned at the precipitate proceeding of his fellow Justices, and very sadly prayed that they would be pleased to hear him, before they proceeded further uppon the committment of the 14 persons then apprehended. It was agreed readily that the last come Justice should be heard; who thereupon moved that the roome might be

ushered, and that none should remayne but the Justices and those gentlemen of quality that should desire to be present with them. It was done as agreed to ; some gentlemen sent for, and admitted ; and an audience given to the last Justice, who spoke words to this purpose :

"Gentlemen,—I see here are apprehended and designed to be committed many persons, against whom by the informations which I have seen, there is (if any) very light evidence. Gentlemen, what is done at this place, a Borough remote from the centre of this large County, and almost 40 miles from Salisbury, will be *expended* both by the Reverend Judges, the learned Counsaile there, the persons Ecclesiastique, and the Gentry of the body of the County ; so that if any thing be done here rashly, it will be severely censured, and for ought I know, those against whom there is some kind of evidence, may escape in the crowd of such against whom I see none. Gentlemen, the mittimus's only mention a general charge of suspicion of witchcraft, and that against three onely there is a very special charge in the informations, that is to say, against Tilling, Peacock, and Witchell. Truly, Gentlemen, I ever thought the word witch to have a very wide extent, for as that word is used now, there may be such as are naturally so, at least their natures are corrupted by atrabilis, or something I understand not ; so that they look, when fixed upon a living object many times, destroyes it by a certayn poyson, very contrary to the purpose of those miserable people, so that it sometimes affects their beloved children, but oftener theyre owne cattle, which pine away and die, to theyr masters' impoverishment ; as in the case of Lee of Christian Malford, who was, although he had a good farm, and was very laborious and diligent, by the death of his own cattle, as well as those of his neighbours, which he fixedly looked upon, reduced to great poverty, for his lands beinge pasture, nobody would rent them, and his owne would pine away and dy. I did know another in the next parish to Christian Malford, ordinarily knowne by the name of Snigg, whose cattle did not dye ordinarily, but would never prove so as to be in good liking, his wife, himselfe, his children, extreemely leane, and out of prooffe, as well as his horses, oxen, kowes, and hoggs ; I never did know any he had fat, but a dog, which kept himselfe in the barne amongst the beanes, out of sight, and had learned to eate them, so that hee was fatt. The truth of what I assert may be easily knowne, one of these persons having dwelt in this Hundred ; the other, Lee, in Damerham North Hundred, in this subdivision. Of these unhappy people there has so much been sayd by phylosophers, phisitions, and poets, that there nothing remayns but to give our compassion to the involuntary witches, and to avoyd any neere converse with them. There are other witches, for so I must call those who in their passion curse in the usual terms, " The Divell take you or him !" " The Divell break your or his neck !" This is an invo-

cation of the Divell; and truly their ignorance cannot well excuse them from being witches, by their inadvertency, for they misprize the invocation of the Divell. There are others who deal in charmes, who have never made any explicit contract, but are by others' contract, perhaps made many generations past, of which they are ignorant, but have by tradition some conditions annex to the charme, as in the case of Mr. Crander, who did wear a charme for an ague, and was advised to take care of water, whilst he wore that charm, he having very narrowly spared drowning in a mill-pound of his owne, not far from his house, was some few days after with Mr. Curtis crossing the Thames from Chemsford (Rempsford), in the night to the Wiltshire side, where he dwelt. At the landing of the boate, both himself and Mr. Curtis were mis'd; and upon search two or three days after, taken up with crooks from under some willows which hung down into the water. The thing is so well knowne, I need say no more of it. Probably the woman was ignorantly a witch, acting by a precedent contract, which might be unknowne to her. The last, and such as deserve the highest punishments, are those who are entered into an explicitt contract with some uncleane spirits, and have had knowingly and willingly conference with such spirits, and are taught by those spirits to hurt man or beast; if beasts are hurt by witchcraft, and the author proved to be so, it is pilloring in 4 townes of the county, and actionable at law, for the first offence: but if any of the King's subjects be by those means kill'd, maymed, or pyned, it is felony, without benefit of Clergy, for the first offence: and this is the charge against Peacock, Tilling, and Witchell. But I see not cleer evidence against Peacock or Witchell. The boyes information I think should have little stresse put on it, for eyther he is an impostor, or indeed he is agitated by some foreigne or external power. If he imposes on us who are auntient and should be prudent, it will be our perpetuall shame, that a boy of 12 years old should not be discovered to impose on us; but if his fitts are not fayned, they must be effected by some spiritual foreigne power, and that power must be of light or darkness; that it is not of light, is as clear as he speaks in another tone and other words than hee was ever heard to speeke, when he was or is well; hee reviles his father and mother, swears and curses and blasphemes God, which he was never observed to doe formerly; which deportment shows by whom hee is actuated; and truly if in such fitts he accuses any person, I think hee is not greatly to be heeded, for as much as those murderers are likelier to destroy the innocent than their own confederates the nocent. As for Ann Tilling's evidence against herselfe, Peacock, and Witchell, it may, for ought I yet see, bee a confederacy with the boyes parents, who are sayd to be ever good to her, to bring in Peacocke and Witchell, who are women of very bad fame, and terrible to the people. Peacocke having been lately acquitted at Salisbury upon a trial for

witchcraft, and proceeding boldly since as is sayd upon confidence, nobody will eyther be at the charge to prosecute her, or run the hazard of her revenge, if shee be acquitted, or of her confederates, if she is found guilty, except such a person as this Mr. Webb is reported to be, for him I doe not know there. I would perswade that the boy be very well observed, and Tilling examined at several times, and with prudence to observe whether she alters her confession or information."

The Alderman and the three other Justices approved what the last-come Justice had proposed, and desired him earnestly to propose some methode for their proceeding. Hee sayd his opinion was, that the eleven persons then in custody should be set at liberty, and that Peacock, Witchell, and Tilling, should be retayned in restraint; but by no means to be ill used, or any tryals made on their persons, as had been so usual in the lately passed times; and alsoe hee thought it might be a safe course for the Justices to send immediately for 2 or more of the ablest Divines in those parts, to confer with Tilling and the other 2.

Witchcraft in Yorkshire.

[1788, *Pt. I.*, p. 455.]

An industrious workman at Sheffield, who had saved seventeen guineas by his labour in working at the steel furnace of Messrs. Hague and Barkin, had the whole stolen out of his house in the night of the 27th of April last.

The poor man, almost in despair, employed the crier to make known his loss, and added that if the money was not returned by such a day, he would *nextways* apply to the *Copper-street conjurer*, and proclaim the thief. In such high reputation, it seems, is this *Copper-street conjurer* for his knowledge in the *Black Art*, that the thief replaced eleven guineas of the money the next night, which, it was supposed, was all he had left of the booty.

ALLEGED WITCHCRAFT AT ROSSINGTON, NEAR DONCASTER, 1605.

[1857, *Part I.*, pp. 593-595.]

If you think the accompanying depositions in a case of alleged witchcraft worth inserting, they are at your service.

Yours, etc., CHARLES JACKSON.

DONCASTER. *Jf.*

The deposicon of ANNE JUDD, of Rosington, taken before HUGH CHILDERES, Maior of Doncaster, the sixt day of februarie, in the yeare of the raigne of our Sovereigne Lord James, by the grace

of god, of England, ffraunce, & Ireland kinge, defender of the faith, etc., the second, & of Scotland the xxxviiith.

This exam^t. beinge examinied the day & yeare above written, sayth as followeth. That Jone Jurdie, wife of Leonard Jurdie of Rosington, beinge bidden to the labor of Peter Murfin's wife, of Rosington, did not come of thre or fower dayes after she was delivered, and when she came she would neither eate nor drinke with the said Murfin's wife, and because the said Peter Murfin did not come into the house to drinke with her; and this exam^t. goeing home with her unto her owne house, she said to this exam^t. that Peter Murfin would not come in & drinke with her, but tell him that I say he had as good as have come. And the day followinge this exam^t. haveinge occasion to goe to the said Jone Jurdie's house, Jane Througheare, servant to the said Jurdie, asked this exam^t. how her sister and her child did; this exam^t. made answer againe, verie weaklie: whereupon the said Jone Jurdie made answer againe, abide her, she is not at the worst, she wilbe worse yett.

And beinge further examined what Jenett Murfin, wife of Peter Murfin, said to her, this exam^t., upon Saturday in the night, beinge the xvth of december last, saith that she said, Anne, hast thou bene asleepe? And this exam^t. answered, noe, I have not. And the said Jenett Murfin said to this exam^t., I am ridden wth a witch. And upon Monday or Tuesday after, Katherin Dolfin, wife of Willm Dolfin, of Rosington, did come to the house of the said Peter Murfin to see the said Jenett Murfin, and the said Jenett Murfin did say unto her in the hearinge of this exam^t., the said Dolfin wife askinge the said Jenett Murfin how she did, she made answer againe, very weake, & never worse; & said, woe worth her, she hath kild me, I mone never recover it. And the said Dolfin wife did aske her if she had any bodie in doubt, & she said, Weay worth her, I did well till Jone Jurdie wife came.

And afterward the xviiith of Aprill, in the third yeare of his Mat^e. raigne of England, before the said HUGHE CHILDERS, Maior, JOHN FERNE, knight, Recorder there, RICHARD LEVETT, and JOHN CARLILL, Aldermen, Justices of the peace within the Boroughe and Soake aforesaid, the within named exam^t. beinge exāied before the said Justices, confesseth all the exāicon within written to be true.

The deposicōn of KATHERIN DOLFIN, wife of Willm Dolfin of Rosington aforesaid, taken at Doncaster the vith day of ffebruarie, Anno Dni, 1604, before the said HUGHE CHILDERS, Maior, as for followinge:—

This exam^t. saith that upon tuesday, beinge the xviiith of November last, this exam^t. beinge at the house of Peter Murfin of Rosington, laborer, the wife of the said Peter beinge in childbedd and sycke, she

asking her how she did, said that she was never worse (God he knoweth); I was never well since saturday that Jurdie wife was here, for the same night I was ridden wth a witch, & therfore I could never eate any meate since but suppinge meate.

And beinge further exaied if she had hard that the said Jurdie wife could helpe any that were bewitched, saith that she hadd hard that she could, for about six yeares since, this exam^t. haveinge a childe sicke, she did goe to her for helpe for her child, and she sent her to one Milner wife to helpe her child, and Milner wife sent her back againe to the said Jurdie wife, and bide her tell her that she could helpe her childe, whereupon she came to her, and the said Jurdie wife bade her goe home, and lay the child in the credle, and she should see the childe mended presentlie after. And further, this exam^t. thinketh that she can helpe any thinge that ys bewitched, and that many of her neighbors do thinke the like of her.

And beinge further exaied what she did heare Leonard Jurdie maide say as concerning Peter Murfin's wife, then beinge sicke, saith that the said Jurdie maide came to this exam^t's. house upon the sixt day of Januarie at night last, and one Anne Judd beinge in this exam^t's. house, did aske the same Jurdie maide what her dame said, and the said Jurdie maide made answer againe and said, I did heare my dame say abide her she ys not at the worst yet, she wilbe worse.

The exaicon of KATHERIN DOLFIN, wife of Willm Dolfyn, of Rosington, in the countie of Yorke, husbandman, the xviiith day of Aprill, Anno Dni, 1605, before HUGHE CHILDERS, Maior of Doncaster, JOHN FERNE, K^t., Recorder there, & JOHN CARLILL of the same Boroughe, Alderman, thre of his Mat^{'s}. Justices of peace within the Boroughe & Soake of Doncaster.

Who saith upon her oath that all her former exaicons are true, & her full knowledge in that matter, saveinge that she further saith, that the said Jurdie wife bade this exam^t., when she was with her for helpe for her child, not to disclose it to her husband nor any person lest, q^d [quoth] the said Jurdie wife, I should be thought to be a witch. And this exam^t. saith further, that Jane the wife of Willm Spight of Rosington, tould this exam^t. about six yeares last past, that she had bene then wth Jurdie wife to have her helpe for a sicke calfe, and Jurdie wife tould the said Spight wife that the calfe was not bewitched nor forspoken, whereupon this exam^t. is induced to suspect that the said Jurdie wife is a witch, because she doth take upon her to helpe such thinges.

And further the exam^t. saith that imediately after she, this exam^t., was exaied before Mr. Hughe Childers, Maior of Doncaster, as concerning the said Jone Jurdie for suspicion of bewitchinge Peter Murfin's wife of Rosington, the said Jurdie beinge in compainy with

this exam^t. in Willm Wainwrighte's house in Doncaster, the said Jurdie wife said to this exam^t. that she would be meete with this exam^t. and her husband both, and this exam^t. had better have staid at home. And within fowrtene dayes after this exam^t. had bene exâied before Mr. Maior, this exam^t. had an oxe fell sicke, and within thre weekes after that a steare fell sicke, and about seaven dayes last past one cowe fell sicke, but sayth the oxe is recovered, and the cowe, that there hath not any of her neighbors had any cattall sicke since, but onclie theirs since this exam^t. was first exâied as aforesaid.

The examinâcon of JONE JURDIE, wife of LEONARDE JURDIE, of Rosington, exâied the xviiith day of Aprill, Anno Dni, 1605, before HUGHE CHILDERS, Maior, JOHN FERNE, Knight, Recorder there, and JOHN CARLILL, Alderman, as followeth :—

JONE JURDIE, wife of Leonarde Jurdie, of the age of lii yeares, or thereabouts, saith that she hath not any skill to helpe sicke folke, or sycke cattell, neither hath ever taken upon her to meddle with any such matter. She also denyeth that she ever said that Peter Murfin's wife, when she was sicke, would be the worse. She denyeth also that ever she said to Dolfin's wife that she would be even with her & her husband at Willm Wainwrighte's house in Doncaster aforesaid, after she hadd bene exâied before Mr. Maior, of Doncaster, aforesaid.

The exâicon of JANE TROUGHEARE, of Rosington, aforesaid, taken xviiith die April, A^o. 1605, before the said Justices.

JANE TROUGHEARE, of Rosington, spinster, saith upon her othe that when Peter Murfin's wife was sicke before Christenmas last, & Anne Judd, her sister, cominge to the house of Leonard Jurdie, this exam^t. beinge their servant there, asked the said Anne how the said Murfin's wife and the child did, and the said Anne answered that they weare very weake, and the child had a sore mouth, whereupon the said Jurdie wife answered that she was very sorie, but they weare not at the worst yett, and willed the said Anne to take sage leaves and honie to rubb the childe's mouth with all.

The exâicon of PETER MURFIN, of Rosington, exâied the xvith day of October, in the third yeare of the raigne of our Sovereigne lord James over England, etc., before HENRIE RILEY, Maior, JOHN FERNE, Knight, Recorder there, & JOHN CARLYLL, Alderman, thre of his Mat^{ys}. Justices of peace within the Boroughe and Soake aforesaid.

He saith that within tow dayes after John Jurdie had been with this exâiat's wife, lyeinge in child bed, upon w^{ch}. child she dyed, herselfe growinge sycke immediatlie after her milke turned into blood.

The exāicon of JANE SPIGHT, wife of Willm Spight of Rosington, aforesaid, taken the xviiith of October, A^o Dni, 1605, before HENRY RILEY, Maior of Doncaster aforesaid, as followeth :—

First beinge exāied, sath that about seaven or eight yeares since, she haveinge a calfe sicke, and haveinge understood before by report, by the wife of George Houghe, that Jone, the wife of Leonard Jurdie, had skill to tell of thinges y^t. weare bewitched, & could helpe them, whereupon this exam^t. did goe to the said Jone Jurdie, & she tould her that the calfe was not bewitched, but that y^t would mone againe, and soe it did. She further saith that at another time this exam^t. had gesse* come to foot-ball play, and dyned with her, and the said Jone Jurdie haveinge likewise gesse at her house to dine with her, it was reported by one Wilbore's wife that the said Jone Jurdie should say that it had bene better that this exam^t. hadd provided noe meate that day, and within six dayes after this exāt's husband's had a stott and a sowe dyed soddanlie.

Witches in Scotland.

[1779, pp. 393-395.]

The following scarce pamphlet, entitled "News from Scotland," etc., was communicated by a constant reader. The singularity of it will justify the republication. The title runs thus : "News from Scotland, declaring the damnable life and death of Doctor Fian, a notable Sorcerer, who was burned at Edenbrough in January last, 1591. Which doctor was register to the devil, that sundry times preached at North Baricke Kirke, to a number of notorious witches. With the true examination of the said doctor and witches, as they uttered them in the presence of the Scottish King. Discovering how they pretended to bewitch and drown his Majesty in the sea coming from Denmark, with such other wonderful matters as the like have not been heard of at any time. Published according to the Scottish copy. At London printed for Thomas Nelson" [1592]. [See *ante*, p. 233 ; Hazlitt, "Collections and Notes," p. 155.]

TO THE READER.

The manifold untruths which are spread abroad, concerning the detestable actions and apprehensions of those witches, whereof this history following truly entreateth, hath caused me to publish the same in print : and the rather for that sundry written copies are lately dispersed thereof, containing that the said witches were first discovered by means of a poor pedlar travelling to the town of Trenent, and that by a wonderful manner he was in a moment conveyed, at midnight, from Scotland to Burdeux in France (being places of no small dis-

* Guests.

tance between) into a merchant's cellar there; and after being sent from Burdeux into Scotland by certain Scottish merchants to the King's Majesty, that he discovered those witches, and was the cause of their apprehension: with a number of matters miraculous and incredible: all which in truth are most false. Nevertheless, to satisfy a number of honest minds, who are desirous to be informed of the verity and truth of their confessions, which for certain is more strange than the common report runneth, and yet with more truth, I have undertaken to publish this short treatise, which declareth the true discourse of all that hath happened, and as well what was pretended by those wicked and detestable witches against the King's Majesty, as also by what means they wrought the same.

All which examinations, gentle reader, I have here truly published, as they were taken and uttered in the presence of the King's Majesty, praying thee to accept it for verity, the same being so true that it cannot be reproved.

A true Discourse of the Apprehension of sundry witches lately taken in Scotland: whercof some are executed, and some are yet imprisoned. With a particular Recital of their examination taken in the presence of the King's Majesty.

God, by His omnipotent power, hath at all times and daily doth take such care, and is so vigilant, for the weal and preservation of His own, that thereby He disappointeth the wicked practices and evil intents of all such as by any means whatsoever seek indirectly to conspire any thing contrary to His holy will: yea, and by the same power He hath lately overthrown and hindered the intentions and wicked dealings of a great number of ungodly creatures, no better than devils: who, suffering themselves to be allured and enticed by the devil, whom they served, and to whom they were privately sworn, entered into the detestable art of witchcraft, which they studied and practised so long time, that in the end they had seduced by their sorcery a number of others to be as bad as themselves, dwelling in the bounds of Lowthian, which is a principal shire or part of Scotland, where the King's Majesty useth to make his chieftest residence or abode: and to the end, that their detestable wickedness which they privily had pretended against the King's Majesty, the commonweal of that country, with the nobility and subjects of the same, should come to light; God, of His unspeakable goodness, did reveal and lay it open in very strange sort; thereby to make known unto the world, that their actions were contrary to the law of God, and the natural affection which we ought generally to bear one to another: the manner of the revealing whereof was as followeth.

Within the town of Trenent, in the kingdom of Scotland, there dwelleth one David Seaton, who, being deputy-bailiff in the said town,

had a maid-servant called Geillis Duncane, who used secretly to be absent and to lay forth of her master's house every other night. This Geillis Duncane took in hand to help all such as were troubled or grieved with any kind of sickness or infirmity ; and in short space did perform many matters most miraculous ; which things, forasmuch as she began to do them upon a sudden, having never done the like before, made her master and others to be in great admiration, and wondered thereat : by means whereof the said David Seaton had his maid in some great suspicion, that she did not those things by natural and lawful ways, but rather supposed it to be done by some extraordinary and unlawful means.

Whereupon her master began to grow very inquisitive, and examined her which way and by what means she was able to perform matters of so great importance ; whereat she gave him no answer : nevertheless, her master, to the intent that he might the better try and find out the truth of the same, did, with the help of others, torment her with the torture of the pilliwinckes upon her fingers, which is a grievous torture, and binding or wrenching her head with a cord or rope, which is a most cruel torture also, yet would she not confess any thing ; whereupon they, suspecting that she had been marked by the devil (as commonly witches are), made diligent search about her, and found the enemy's mark to be in her forecrag, or forepart of her throat ; which being found, she confessed that all her doings were done by the wicked allurements and enticements of the devil, and that she did them by witchcraft.

After this her confession, she was committed to prison, where she continued for a season, where immediately she accused these persons following to be notorious witches, and caused them forthwith to be apprehended one after another, viz., Agnes Sampson, the oldest witch of them all, dwelling in Haddington ; Agnes Tompson of Edenbrough ; Doctor Fian, alias John Cunningham, master of the school at Salt pans in Lowthian, of whose life and strange acts you shall hear more largely in this discourse : these were by the said Geillis Duncane accused, as also George Motts' wife dwelling in Salt pans, Robert Grierson skipper, and Jennet Bandilandis, with the potter's wife of Seaton, the smith at the Brigge Hallis, with innumerable others dwelling in that part, and dwelling in those bounds aforesaid ; of whom some are already executed, the rest remain in prison, to receive the doom of judgment at the King's Majesty's will and pleasure.

The said Geillis Duncane also caused Ewphame Meealrean to be apprehended, who conspired and performed the death of her god-father, and who used her art upon a gentleman, being one of the lords and justices of the session, for bearing goodwill to her daughter : she also caused to be apprehended one Barbara Naper, for bewitching to death Archibalde last Earl of Angus, who languished to death by witchcraft, and yet the same was not suspected, but that he died of

so strange a disease as the physicians knew not how to cure or remedy the same : but of all other the said witches, these two last before recited were reputed for as civil, honest women as any that dwelleth within the city of Edenbrough, before they were apprehended. Many others besides were taken dwelling in Lieth, who were detained in prison, until his Majesty's further will and pleasure be known : of whose wicked doings you shall particularly hear, which were as followeth.

This aforesaid Agnis Sampson, which was the elder witch, was taken and brought to Haliriud-house before the King's Majesty and sundry others of the nobility of Scotland, where she was straitly examined, but all the persuasions which the King's Majesty used to her with the rest of his council might not provoke or induce her to confess any thing, but she stood stiffly in the denial of all that was laid to her charge : whereupon they caused her to be conveyed away to prison, there to receive such tortures as hath been lately provided for witches in that country. And forasmuch as by due examination of witchcraft and witches in Scotland, it hath lately been found that the devil doth generally mark them with a private mark, by reason the witches have confessed themselves, that the devil doth lick them with his tongue in some privy part of their body before he doth receive them to be his servants, which mark commonly is given them under the hair in some part of their body, whereby it may not easily be found out or seen, although they be searched ; and generally so long as the mark is not seen to those which search them, so long the parties that have the mark will never confess any thing : therefore, by special commandment, this Agnis Sampson had all her hair shaven off in each part of her body ; and had her head thraven with a rope, according to the custom of that country, being a pain most grievous, which she continued almost an hour ; during which time she would not confess any thing until the devil's mark was found upon her privities ; then she immediately confessed whatsoever was demanded of her, and justifying those persons aforesaid to be notorious witches.

Item, the same Agnis Tompson was brought again before the King's Majesty and his council, and being examined of the meetings and detestable dealings of those witches, she confessed that upon the night of Allhollen Even last she was accompanied as well with the persons aforesaid, as also with a great many other witches, to the number of two hundred, and that all they together went by sea, each one in a riddle or cieve, and went in the same very substantially with flagons of wine, making merry, and drinking by the way in the same riddles or cieves, to the kirk of North Barrick in Lowthian, and that after they had landed took hands on the land, and danced this reel or short dance, singing all with one voice—

“Commer goe ye before, commer goe ye,
Gif you will not goe before, commer let me.”

At which time she confessed that this Geilles Duncan did go before them, playing this reel or dance upon a small trump, called a Jew's trump, until they entered into the kirk of North Barrick.

These confessions made the King in a wonderful admiration, and he sent for the said Geillis Duncane, who upon the like trump did play the said dance before the King's Majesty; who, in respect of the strangeness of these matters, took great delight to be present at their examinations.

[1779, pp. 449-452.]

Item, the said Agnis Tompson confessed, that the devil being then at North Barrick kirk, attending their coming, in the habit or likeness of a man, and seeing that they tarried over long, he, at their coming, enjoined them all to a penance, which was, that they should kiss his buttocks, in sign of duty to him; which being put over the pulpit bar, every one did as he had enjoined them; and having made his ungodly exhortations, wherein he did greatly inveigh against the King of Scotland, he received their oaths for their good and true service towards him, and departed: which done, they returned to sea, and so home again.

At which time the witches demanded of the devil why he did bear such hatred to the King; who answered, by reason the King is the greatest enemy he hath in the world; all which their confessions and depositions are still extant upon record.

Item, the said Agnis Sampson confessed before the King's Majesty sundry things which were so miraculous and strange, as that his Majesty said they were all extreme liars; whereat she answered, she would not wish his Majesty to suppose her words to be false, but rather to believe them, in that she would discover such matter unto him as his Majesty should not any ways doubt of.

And thereupon, taking his Majesty a little aside, she declared unto him the very words which passed between the King's Majesty and his Queen at Upslo in Norway, the first night of their marriage, with their answer each to other: whereat the King's Majesty wondered greatly, and swore, by the living God, that he believed that all the devils in hell could not have discovered the same, acknowledging her words to be most true, and therefore gave the more credit to the rest that is before declared.

Touching this Agnis Tompson, she is the only woman, who, by the devil's persuasion, should have intended, and put in execution, the King's Majesty's death in this manner.

She confessed, that she took a black toad, and did hang the same up by the heels, three days, and collected and gathered the venom as it dropped and fell from it in an oyster-shell, and kept the same venom close covered, until she should obtain any part or piece of foul linen cloth, that had appertained to the King's Majesty, as shirt,

handkercher, napkin, or any other thing, which she practised to obtain by means of one John Kers, who being attendant in his Majesty's chamber, desired him for old acquaintance between them to help her to one, or a piece of such a cloth as is aforesaid; which thing the said John Kers denied to help her to, saying he could not help her unto it.

And the said Agnis Tompson, by her deposition since her apprehension, saith, that if she had obtained any one piece of linen cloth which the King had worn and fouled, she had bewitched him to death, and put him to such extraordinary pains, as if he had been laying upon sharp thorns and ends of needles.

Moreover she confessed, that at the time when his Majesty was in Denmark, she, being accompanied with the parties before specially named, took a cat, and christened it, and afterwards bound to each part of that cat the chiefest parts of a dead man, and several joints of his body, and that in the night following the said cat was conveyed into the midst of the sea by all these witches sailing in their riddles or cieves, as is aforesaid, and so left the said cat right before the town of Lieth in Scotland: this done, there did arise such a tempest in the sea, as a greater hath not been seen: which tempest was the cause of the perishing of a boat or vessel coming over from the town of Brunt-island to the town of Lieth, wherein was sundry jewels and rich gifts, which should have been presented to the now Queen of Scotland, at her Majesty's coming to Lieth.

Again it is confessed, that the said christened cat was the cause that the King's Majesty's ship, at his coming forth of Denmark, had a contrary wind to the rest of his ships, then being in his company; which thing was most strange and true, as the King's Majesty acknowledged, for when the rest of the ships had a fair and good wind, then was the wind contrary and altogether against his Majesty; and further, the said witch declared, that his Majesty had never come safely from the sea, if his faith had not prevailed above their intentions.

Moreover the said witches, being demanded how the devil would use them when he was in their company, they confessed, that when the devil did receive them for his servants, and that they had vowed themselves unto him, then he would carnally use them, albeit to their little pleasure in respect of his cold nature; and would do the like at sundry other times.

As touching the aforesaid Dr. Fian, alias John Cuningham, the examination of his acts, since his apprehension, declareth the great subtilty of the devil, and therefore maketh things to appear the more miraculous: for, being apprehended by the accusation of the said Geillis Duncane aforesaid, who confessed he was their register, and that there was not one man suffered to come to the devil's readings but only he; the said doctor was taken and imprisoned,

and used with the accustomed pain provided for those offences, inflicted upon the rest, as is aforesaid.

First, by thraving of his head with a rope, whereat he would confess nothing.

Secondly, he was persuaded by fair means to confess his follies, but that would prevail as little.

Lastly, he was put to the most severe and cruel pain in the world, called *the bootes*, who, after he had received three strokes, being enquired if he would confess his damnable acts and wicked life, his tongue would not serve him to speak ; in respect whereof, the rest of the witches willed to search his tongue, under which was found two pins thrust up into the head ; whereupon the witches did say, "Now is the charm stinted ;" and shewed, that those charmed pins were the cause he could not confess any thing ; then was he immediately released of the bootes, brought before the King, his confession was taken, and his own hand willingly set thereunto, which contained as followeth.

First, that at the general meetings of those witches he was always present ; that he was clerk to all those that were in subjection to the devil's service, bearing the name of witches ; that always he did take their oaths for their true service to the devil, and that he wrote for them such matters as the devil still pleased to command him.

Item, he confessed, that by his witchcraft he did bewitch a gentleman dwelling near to the Saltpans, where the said doctor kept school, only for being enamoured of a gentlewoman whom he loved himself : by means of which his sorcery, witchcraft, and devilish practices, he caused the said gentleman that once in twenty-four hours he fell into a lunacy and madness, and so continued one whole hour together ; and for the verity of the same, he caused the gentleman to be brought before the King's Majesty, which was on the 24th Dec. last, and being in his Majesty's chamber, suddenly he gave a great screech, and fell into a madness, sometimes bending himself, and sometimes capering, so directly up, that his head did touch the ceiling of the chamber, to the great admiration of his Majesty and others then present ; so that all the gentlemen in the chamber were not able to hold him, until they called in more help, who together bound him hand and foot : and suffering the said gentleman to lay still until his fury were past, he within an hour came again to himself, when being demanded of the King's Majesty what he saw or did all that while, answered, that he had been in a sound sleep.

Item, the said doctor did also confess, that he had used means sundry times to obtain his purpose and wicked intent of the same gentlewoman, and feeling himself disappointed of his intention, he determined by all ways he might to obtain the same, trusting by conjuring, witchcraft, and sorcery, to obtain it in this manner.

It happened, this gentlewoman being unmarried, had a brother

who went to school with the said doctor, and calling his scholar to him, demanded if he did lay with his sister, who answered he did, by means whereof he thought to obtain his purpose; and therefore secretly promised to teach him without stripes, so he would obtain for him three hairs of his sister's privities, at such time as he should spy best occasion for it: which the youth promised faithfully to perform, and vowed speedily to put it in practice, taking a piece of conjured paper of his master to lap them in when he had got them: and thereupon the boy practised nightly to obtain his master's purpose, especially when his sister was asleep.

But God, who knoweth the secrets of all hearts, and revealeth all wicked and ungodly practices, would not suffer the intents of this devilish doctor to come to that purpose which he supposed it would; and therefore, to declare that He was heavily offended with his wicked intent, did so work by the gentlewoman's own means, that in the end the same was discovered and brought to light: for she being one night asleep, and her brother in bed with her, suddenly cried out to her mother, declaring that her brother would not suffer her to sleep; whereupon her mother, having a quick capacity, did vehemently suspect Dr. Fian's intention, by reason she was a witch of herself, and therefore presently arose, and was very inquisitive of the boy to understand his intent, and, the better to know the same, did beat him with sundry stripes, whereby he discovered the truth unto her.

The mother, therefore, being well practised in witchcraft, did think it most convenient to meet with the doctor in his own art, and thereupon took the paper from the boy, wherein he should have put the same hairs, and went to a young heifer which never had borne calf or gone to the bull, and with a pair of sheers clipped off three hairs from the udder of the cow, and wrapped them in the same paper, which she again delivered to the boy, then willing him to give the same to his said master, which he immediately did.

The schoolmaster, so soon as he had received them, thinking them indeed to be the maid's hairs, went straight and wrought his art upon them; but the doctor had no sooner done his intent to them, but presently the heifer or cow, whose hairs they were indeed, came unto the door of the church wherein the schoolmaster was, into which the heifer went, and made towards the schoolmaster, leaping and dancing upon him, and following him forth of the church, and to what place soever he went, to the great admiration of all the townsmen of Salt-pans, and many others who did behold the same.

The report whereof made all men imagine that he did work it by the devil, without whom it could never have been so sufficiently effected; and thereupon, the name of the said Dr. Fian (who was but a very young man) began to grow so common among the people of Scotland, that he was secretly nominated for a notable conjurer.

All which, although in the beginning he denied, and would not confess, yet having felt the pain of the boots (and the charm stinted as aforesaid), he confessed all the aforesaid to be most true, without producing any witnesses to justify the same, and thereupon before the King's Majesty he subscribed the said confessions with his own hand, which for truth remaineth upon record in Scotland.

After that, the depositions and examinations of the said Dr. Fian, *alias* Cuninghame, were taken, as already is declared, with his own hand willingly set thereunto, he was by the master of the prison committed to ward, and appointed to a chamber by himself, where forsaking his wicked ways, acknowledging his most ungodly life, showing that he had too much followed the allurements and enticements of Satan, and fondly practised his conclusions, by conjuring, witchcraft, enchantment, sorcery, and such like, he renounced the devil and all his wicked works, vowed to lead the life of a Christian, and seemed newly converted towards God.

The morrow after, upon conference had with him, he granted that the devil had appeared unto him in the night before, apparelled all in black, with a white wand in his hand, and that the devil demanded of him if he would continue his faithful service, according to his first oath and promise made to that effect. Whom (as he then said) he utterly renounced to his face, and said unto him in this manner, "Avoid, Satan, avoid! for I have listened too much unto thee, and by the same thou hast undone me, in respect whereof I utterly forsake thee." To whom the devil answered, that "once ere thou die thou shalt be mine." And with that (as he said) the devil broke the white wand, and immediately vanished forth of his sight.

Thus all the day this Dr. Fian continued very solitary, and seemed to have care of his own soul, and would call upon God, showing himself penitent for his wicked life; nevertheless the same night he found such means, that he stole the key of the prison door and chamber in which he was, which in the night he opened, and fled away to the Salt-pans, where he was always resident, and first apprehended. Of whose sudden departure, when the King's Majesty had intelligence, he presently commanded diligent enquiry to be made for his apprehension, and for the better effecting thereof, he sent public proclamations into all parts of his land to the same effect. By means of whose hot and hardy pursuit he was again taken and brought to prison, and then being called before the King's Highness, he was re-examined as well touching his departure, as also touching all that had before happened.

But this doctor, notwithstanding that his own confession appeareth remaining in record under his own handwriting, and the same thereunto fixed in the presence of the King's Majesty and sundry of his council, yet did he utterly deny the same.

Whereupon the King's Majesty, perceiving his stubborn wilfulness, conceived and imagined that, in the time of his absence, he had entered

into new conference and league with the devil, his master, and that he had been again newly marked, for the which he was narrowly searched, but it could not in any wise be found ; yet for more trial of him, to make him confess, he was commanded to have a most strange torment, which was done in this manner following :

His nails upon all his fingers were riven and pulled off with an instrument, called in Scottish a *turkas*, which in England we call a pair of pincers, and under every nail there were thrust in two needles, over even up to the heads. At all which torments, notwithstanding, the doctor never shrunk any whit, neither would he then confess it the sooner for all the tortures inflicted upon him.

Then was he, with all convenient speed, by commandment, conveyed again to the torment of the bootes, wherein he continued a long time, and did abide so many blows in them, that his legs were crushed and beaten together as small as might be, and the bones and flesh so bruised, that the blood and marrow spouted forth in great abundance, whereby they were made unserviceable for ever. And, notwithstanding all these grievous pains and cruel torments, he would not confess anything ; so deeply had the devil entered into his heart, that he utterly denied all that which he had before avouched, and would say nothing thereunto but this—that what he had done and said before was only done and said for fear of pains which he had endured.

Upon great consideration, therefore, taken by the King's Majesty and his council, as well for the due execution of justice upon such detestable malefactors, as for example' sake, to remain a terror to all others hereafter, that shall attempt to deal in the like wicked and ungodly actions, as witchcraft, sorcery, conjuration, and such like, the said Dr. Fian was soon after arraigned, condemned, and adjudged by the law to die, and then to be burned, according to the law of that land provided in that behalf. Whereupon he was put into a cart, and, being first strangled, he was immediately put into a great fire, being ready provided for that purpose, and there burned on the Castle-hill of Edinburgh, on a Saturday in the end of January last past, 1591.

The rest of the witches which are not yet executed remain in prison till further trial, and knowledge of his Majesty's pleasure.

This strange discourse before recited may perhaps give some occasion of doubt to such as shall happen to read the same, and thereby conjecture that the King's Majesty would not hazard himself in the presence of such notorious witches, lest thereby might have ensued great danger to his person and the general state of the land ; which thing, in truth, might well have been feared. But, to answer generally to such, let this suffice : that, first, it is well known that the King is the child and servant of God, and they but servants to the devil ; he is the Lord's anointed, and they but vessels of God's wrath ; he is a true

Christian, and trusteth in God, they worse than infidels, for they only trust in the devil, who daily serves them, till he have brought them to utter destruction. But hereby it seemeth that his Highness carried a magnanimous and undaunted mind, not feared with their enchantments, but resolute in this, that so long as God is with him, he feareth not who is against him. And truly, the whole scope of this treatise doth so plainly lay open the wonderful providence of the Almighty, that if he had not been defended by His omnipotence and power, his Highness had never returned alive in his voyage from Denmark ; so that there is no doubt but God would as well defend him on the land as on the sea, where they pretended their damnable practice. [See note 47.]

MILK WITCH AT OCHILTREE.

[1788, *Pt. II.*, p. 925.]

There is a woman in the village of Ochiltree who has had the misfortune to be reputed a milk-witch, and under that character blamed for every wayward thing that happened. A woman who had gone with child longer than ordinary, had some difference with this witch, and this circumstance was imputed to her sorcery. The rumour increased, the parties grew incensed : and the matter came to a hearing at the Sessions of the Peace. A reconciliation was proposed, and, as a test, the witch was enjoined to satisfy the woman so far as to "wish her well, and that God might bless her and all that she had." This at first was refused, on the score that if the woman should afterwards be delivered the opinions that had taken place would be confirmed. By this refusal the woman's apprehensions were increased. Two years elapsed, and the woman still remained in the same condition. On Monday, the 22nd September, the affair was brought to a serious hearing before the Magistrates ; many witnesses were examined ; the Justices insisted on mutual forgiveness, and the former injunction was insisted on ; which was no sooner pronounced than the woman was taken with labour pains, and soon delivered of a living child, and afterward, by the assistance of surgeons, of part of a dead one : the first supposed a fresh conception ; the latter, the one that should have been born in due time. This has excited much speculation.



Notes.



NOTES.

1 (page 7). The books here mentioned are the following : *A rationale upon the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England*, by Anthony Sparrow, Lord Bishop of Exon [two parts]: London, 1661, 12mo. [the second edition]. Other editions followed in 1676, 1684, 1704, 1722, and 1839.—*Quatuor Evangeliorum, versiones perantiquæ Gothica et Anglo Saxonica ed. Junius, hanc ex codicibus MSS. recudi curavit Mareschallus acc. Gothicum Glossarium et Alphabeta*, 2 vols., 4to., Dordrecht, 1665, and *Ulfilas: Evangelia, Gothice et Anglo Saxonice, ed. Junius et Mareschallus acc. Observationes et Glossarium*, sm. 4to. First edition of *Ulfilas*, Amstel., 1684. These titles are to be found in Quaritch's *General Catalogue of European Philology*.—*A rational illustration of the Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments, and other rites and ceremonies of the Church, according to the use of the Church of England: the whole being the substance of everything material in all former Ritualists, Commentators, or others, upon the same subject*. The third edition, London, 1720, fol. The fourth edition was published in 1722, 8vo.; the eighth in 1759; and others in 1794 (Oxford), 1802 (Oxford), 1810 (Oxford), 1858 (Cambridge, edited for the syndics of the University Press by G. E. Corrie.) There is also an edition in Bohu's Standard Library, 1846.

2 (page 9). There is no address to this letter, and therefore the locality alluded to in the note is a little obscure. As, however, the signature "T. Rowe" was a *nom de plume* of Dr. Samuel Pegge, who lived at Whittington near Chesterfield, from 1751 to 1796, we may take it that this was the district alluded to.

3 (page 15). An answer to this query is partly given on pages 102 and 103, by correspondents who refer the custom of Hagman Heigh to *New Year's Eve*, or 31 December, instead of *the eve of New Year's Day*.

4 (page 19). This communication is printed under "Christmas Eve" on page 75.

5 (page 20). In *Round about our Coal Fire*, a tract published in 1740, it is said, "the dancing and singing of the Benchers in the great Inns of Court at Christmas is in some sort founded upon Interest; for they hold, as I am informed, some Priviledge, by dancing about the fire in the middle of their hall, and singing the song of *Round about our Coal Fire*, etc." See Ellis's *Brand's Popular Antiquities*, vol. i., p. 310, quoting an instance in 1733 from Wynne's *Eunomus*, iv. 207. Ellis is wrong in placing this ceremony under Midsummer Day. The account from Wynne's *Eunomus*; or, *Dialogues concerning the Law and Constitution of England*, 1774, vol. iv., p. 106, is as follows, and distinctly dates it February 2, 1733:—

"After the play, the Lord Chancellor, Master of the Temple, Judges, and Benchers retired into their Parliament chamber; and in about half an hour after—

wards came into the hall again, and a large ring was formed round the fireplace (but no fire nor embers were on it). Then the Master of the Revels, who went first, took the Lord Chancellor by the right hand, and he with his left took Mr. J. Page, who, joined to the other judges, sergeants, and Benchers present, danced, or rather *walked, round about the coal fire, according to the old ceremony, three times*; during which they were aided in the figure of the dance by Mr. George Cooke, the prothonotary, then upwards of sixty; and all the time of the dance the antient song, accompanied with music, was sung by one Toby Aston, dressed in a bargown, whose father had been formerly Master of the Plea Office in the King's Bench."

5* (page 21). A custom incidental to Shrove-Tuesday is recorded in the volume for 1781, pp. 113, 114, and should have been inserted in the text. It is as follows:—

I send you the following instance of a festivity that used to be holden at Norwich on Shrove Tuesday; and if you think it a sufficiently curious specimen of ancient disporte, you may give it a place in your magazine.

Yours, etc., J. C.

In 1442 there had been a great insurrection in Norwich, for which the citizens were indicted, who, among other things, pleaded in their excuse, "That John Gladman, of Norwich, who ever was, and at this our is, a man of sad (serious) disposition, and trew and feythfull to God and to the Kyng, of disporte as hath been accustomed in any cite or burgh thorowe alle this reame, on Tuesday in the last ende of Cristemesse, viz., *Fastynge Tuesday*, made a *disporte* with his neighbours, havynge his hors trappyd with tynfoyle, and other nyse disgisy things, coronned as Kyng of Cristemesse, in tokyn that seson should ende with the twelve moneths of the yere: afor hym went yche moneth, disguysed after the seson required, and *Lenton* clad in whyte and red heryngs skinns, and his hors trappyd with oystyrshells after him, in tokyn that sadnesse should folowe, and an holy time; and so rode in diverse stretis of the cite, with other people with hym disguysed, makyng *myrth, disportes*, and plays."—*Blomefield's Hist. Norf.*, v. ii., p. 3.

6 (page 22). The following are the references to the letters of protest sent to the *Gentleman's Magazine* against throwing at cocks on Shrove Tuesday, 1737, pp. 6, 7; 1751, p. 8; 1756, p. 17; 1762, pp. 6, 7; 1781, p. 72. The first reference contains the following observations:—

An enquiry into the original meaning of cock-throwing on Shrove-Tuesday.

Battering with missive weapons a cock tied to a stake is an annual diversion that for time immemorial has prevailed in this island. As this custom is peculiar to our nation, and so generally practised amongst us, an enquiry into the original meaning of it will, I hope, be acceptable to the curious. Without doubt something was at first designed by it: we now retain the thing, the reason of which is quite forgot and lost. For want of better light and evidence to direct us, we must be satisfied with such conjectures as seem with greatest probability to account for it.

It has been a common custom in all ages to represent in effigy the persons we have any hatred to, or contempt of, and to use the representations with ridicule or rage, as we would the persons themselves represented, if we had them in our power. Hanging or burning the effigies of malefactors who are out of the reach of justice, is a custom at this time in use in several parts of Europe; and his Holiness of Rome (in defiance of the abolition of the writ *de heretico comburendo*) has been often buffoon'd and executed in effigy by the stanch Protestants of the good city of London.

That the cock at the stake is also a representative, will appear highly probable from what follows:

"The original meaning of the custom under enquiry I take to be this: In our wars with France in former ages, our ingenious forefathers invented this emble-

matical way of expressing their derision of, and resentment towards, that nation. Poor *Monsieur* at the stake was pelted by men and boys in a very rough and hostile manner. The brawny arm that demolish'd the greatest number of the enemy gained the honour of being the hero and champion of its country. The engagement generally continued great part of the day, and the courageous, brave English always came off conquerors.

"It will reasonably be ask'd why I fix upon the French, rather than the Scotch, the Spanish, or any other nation! And why should the enemy be represented by a cock, rather than by a hen, a goose, a dog, or any other animal? The reason is evident: a cock has the misfortune to be called in Latin by the same word which signifies a Frenchman; so that nothing could so well represent, or be represented by, the one as the other. The Frenchman is ingeniously ridicul'd and bastinado'd in the person of his namesake. This naturally accounts for the cruel and barbarous treatment poor chanticleer has undeservedly met with. It was an ingenious politick contrivance to exasperate the minds and whet the resentment of the people against the enemies of their country."

Whoever casts round his eye at Blenheim house will observe over the portals, finely carv'd in stone, the figure of a monstrous lion, the arms of England, tearing to pieces a harmless cock, in spite of Pliny's* authority to the contrary. This device emblematically represents the English victories over the French under the conduct of the late Duke of Marlborough. This interpretation is not a jingle of accidental circumstances, but was really design'd when the images were there erected. A conceit so low in so noble a pile of building may justly be called a pun in architecture.

The time when this lucky hint of substituting namesakes for each other first came into practice I am not able to discover. From what we may suppose would be thought wit in that age, and the circumstances of affairs relating to us and the French, I conjecture it to have happened in the reign of Edward III.,† when the two nations seem to have been exasperated against each other by more than ordinary resentment.

7 (page 23). This is one of the Roman Liturgies: *Hore intemperate virginis marie secūdum usum Romanū totaliter ad longū sine require; cum pluribus oratiōibus in gallico et latino*. Printed on vellum par Thielman Kerver pour Gilles Remake-liegoys, Paris [1496], 8vo; and there is another by Maistre Jehā Phillipe pour Thielmā Keover, Paris, 1497, 8vo. Both of these are in the British Museum Library.

8 (page 27). Two books by Jehoshaphat Aspin bear upon this subject: *Cosmorama; a View of the Costumes and the Peculiarities of all Nations*, London [1826], 12mo., and *Ancient Customs, Sports, and Pastimes of the English*, London, 1832, 16mo. [pp. viii. 256]. The contents of this latter book are as follows: The Britons—The Saxons—The Danes—The Normans—The English: Coronations—Pageants and Processions—Depositions—Martial Exercises—Field Sports—The Drama—Christmas Gambols—Masques—Interlocutory Plays—May Games—Lady of the Lamb—Midsummer Festivities—St. Catherine's Festival—Hock Tide—Sheep Shearing and Harvest Home—Mothering Sunday—Saints' Festivals—Athletic Exercises—Games with the Ball—Minstrelsy—Itinerant Performers—Feats of Agility—Trampoline Feats—Mountebanks—Tinkers—Dancing Animals—Animals Counterfeited—Wodehouses or Savage Men—Hubby Horse.

* *Nat. Hist.*, l. viii. c. 16.

† The following passage is in the *Life of Archbishop Becket*: "Præterea quotannis, die quæ vocatur Carnilevaria (Shrove Tuesday), scholarum singuli pueri suos apportant magistro suo Gallos gallinaceos pugnaces; et totum illud antemeridianum datur ludio puerorum spectare in Scholis suorum pugnas Gallorum." If cock throwing on Shrove Tuesday had been the diversion of youth at that time, as well as cock fighting, it had without doubt been mentioned with it.

9 (page 27). The following are the numerous references in *Notes and Queries* to Simnel Bread. 1st series, vol. iii., p. 506, iv. 212, ix. 322, x. 333; 2nd series, v. 234, 307, 345, 441; 3rd series, iv. 291; fifth series, iii. 226.

10 (page 27). Wright's vocabularies were first published in 1857, under the title of *A Volume of Vocabularies, illustrating the condition and manners of our forefathers from the 10th century to the 15th*; London, 1857, 8vo. A recent edition has been published, with the following title, *Anglo-Saxon and Old English Vocabularies*, by Thomas Wright, M.A., Second Edition, edited and collated by Richard Paul Wülcker. London, 1884 (Triibner), 2 vols., 8vo.

11 (page 27). An imperfect copy of Joannes de Garlandia's *Multorum Vocabulorum equivocorum interpretatio*, by Wynandus (*sic*) de Worde, in 1499, 4to., and another by R. Pynson, London, 1514, 4to., are in the British Museum Library. Mr. Joseph Mayer, in the first volume of his *Library of National Antiquities*, Liverpool, 1857, 8vo, has reprinted Garland's Dictionaries, and see Wülcker's preface to the new edition of *Wright's Anglo-Saxon and Old English Vocabularies*, p. ix.

12 (page 30). This probably refers to *The Furmetary, a very innocent and harmless poem. In three cantos*, London, printed and sold by A. Baldwin, near the Oxford Arms Inn, in Warwick Lane, 1699, 4to. There is no author's name, and the preface is signed, "And per se and." There are 14 pages, and the poem is intended for a satire on the times, but does not contain anything worth noting, except it may be a reference to "London Cries" and to the Fleet River.

"I can, but with regret, I can despise
Innumerable of the London Cries,
When Pease and Maccarel, with their harsher sound,
The tender organs of my ears confound."

See for this subject, *Gentleman's Magazine Library, Manners and Customs*, pp. 13-15.

13 (page 32). The first of these references is to 1785 (ii.), p. 779, which is as follows:—Newark fairs: Careing fair will be held on Friday before Careing Sunday, which is the Sunday fortnight before Easter. In Nottinghamshire we remember to have heard an old couplet,

"Care Sunday, care away,
Palm Sunday and Easter Day."

See also *Gentleman's Magazine Library, "Dialects, Proverbs, and Word-Lore,"* pp. 80-82.

14 (page 35). The following is the account referred to, from 1731, p. 172:—*Thursday, April 15.*—Being Maundy Thursday, there was distributed at the Banqueting House, Whitehall, to 48 poor men and 48 poor women (the King's age 48), boiled beef and shoulders of mutton, and small bowls of ale, which is called dinner; after that, large wooden platters of fish and loaves, viz., undress'd, one large old ling, and one large dried cod, twelve red herrings, and twelve white herrings, and four half quarter loaves; each person had one platter of this provision, after which was distributed to them shoes, stockings, linen and woollen cloth, and leathern bags with one-penny, two penny, three-penny, and four-penny pieces of silver, and shillings; to each about £4 in value. His Grace the Lord Archbishop of York, Lord High Almoner, performed the annual ceremony of washing the feet of a certain number of poor in the Royal Chapel, Whitehall, which was formerly done by the Kings themselves, in imitation of our Saviour's pattern of humility, etc. James II. was the last King who performed this in person.

In Langley's "Polydore Vergill" we read: "The Kynges and Quenes of England on that day washe the feete of so many pnoore meine and women as they be yeres old, and geve to every of them so many pence, with a gowne, and another ordinary almes of meate, and kysse their feete; and afterwards geve their gownes of

their backs to them that they se most nedy of al the number." The customs of the day are also described in the following lines, supplied by Barnaby Googe, in the *Popish Kingdom*:

And here the monkes their Maundie make, with sundrie solemne rights
And signes of great humilitie, and wondrous pleasaunt sights
Ech one the other's feete doth wash, and wipe them cleane and drie,
With hatefull minde, and secret frawde, that in their heartes doth lye;
As if that Christ, with His examples, did these things require,
And not to helpe our brethren here, with zeale and free desire;
Each one supplying other's want in all things that they may,
And He Himselfe a servaunt made, to serve us every way.
Then straight the loaves doe walke, and pottes in every place they skinke,
Wherewith the holy fathers oft to pleasaunt damsels drinke.

With reference to the *Festival*, printed by Wynkyn de Worde, alluded to on page 36, it is probably the book mentioned by Hazlitt in *Collections and Notes*, second series, p. 217.

15 (page 42). Andrew Boorde's *Breviary of Healthe for all maner of sicknesses and diseases, the which may be in man or woman, doth follow*, was published 1552, at London, "at the sygne of the George next to Saynt Dunstone's Church by Wylliam Powell." Another edition was issued in 1587, "Imprinted at London by Thomas East," and Mr. Furnivall reprinted and edited for the Early English Text Society in 1870, Boorde's *Dyetary of Helth*, 1542.

16 (page 53). See an article on Valentine's Day, in the *Antiquary* of February, 1882, vol. v., pp. 41-50, by Professor John W. Hales, which gives an admirable summary from early English Literature of the growth of the customs appertaining to this day. Brand's *Popular Antiquities*, Hone's *Every Day Book*, Chamber's *Book of Days*, Dyer's *British Popular Customs*, should also be consulted.

17 (page 61). This is the well-known *The Popish Kingdome, or reigne of Antichrist written in Latine verse by Thomas Naogeorgus and Englyshed by Barnaby Googe*: Imprinted at London by Henrie Denham for Richard Watkins, anno 1570. Mr. Robert Charles Hope, F.S.A., reprinted this in 1880. See leaf 55 for the quotation in the text.

18 (page 64). See the *Antiquary*, vol. vi., pp. 1-4, July, 1882, for an article on St. Swithin's Day, by Henry B. Wheatley. Besides the usual books on this subject, I would refer to a valuable paper on "St. Swithin and Rainmakers," by F. E. Sawyer, in the *Folk-Lore Journal*, vol. i., pp. 211-217 (July, 1883). The following quotation from this article may be acceptable:

"The position of St. Swithin as a Rain-Saint, or Deity, has been thoroughly considered in its relation to a period of heavy rain, or continuous rain, which is supposed to be probable at certain periods of the year. It is open to question whether this view of the legend be correct, and the Rev. John Earle says, 'The real origin appears to have been the habit of attaching to the saints of Christendom any remnants of traditional and mythological lore which, by the extinction of heathendom, had lost their centre and principle cohesion and were drifting about in search of new connections.'* There are, as Mr. Earle remarks, 'a host of raining saints,'† amongst whom we find in *Great Britain* the days of SS. Simon and Jude (October 28); Bullion's Day (Scotland, July 4); S. John the Baptist (June 24); S. Vitus, Translation of S. Martin, Cewydd-y-gylaw (Cewydd of the rain, July 1, a Welsh saint‡); *Flanders*, S. Godeliève; *Germany*, the Seven Sleepers (July 27); *Tuscany*, S. Galla's Day (October 5); and *Italy*, S. Bibiana (December 2).

* *Legends of St. Swithin*, p. 53.

† *Proceedings of the Bath Natural History and Antiquarian Field Club*, vol. ii., p. 161.

‡ *Notes and Queries*, 3rd S., vol. viii., p. 508.

"When it is remembered that the dates range over a period of five months in the comparatively limited district of North Western Europe, the idea of a rainy period appears untenable, and it may be desirable to consider the legend from a fresh point of view, and to look at St. Swithin as one of a group, or collection, of Rain-Saints.

"In the earliest periods the phenomena of nature—always mysterious, terrible, and awe-inspiring—are at once deified, and we find Storm-Gods, Thunder-Gods, and Rain-Gods. In time anthropomorphic conceptions of deity arise, and then the phenomena of nature become attributes of deity. It is in this stage that they present to the folk-lore student features of peculiar interest, namely, in the primitive conceptions of the causes of meteorological (or natural) phenomena. At a still later period sanctity itself, or rather, saintship, is invested with the control over nature, and is thought to possess phenomena-producing powers, which are even extended to the remains of saints. The story of S. Swithin belongs to the latter group."

19 (page 64). See Ellis's *Brand's Popular Antiquities* and *Antiquary* as quoted in next note. The *Promptorium Parvulorum* gives "Lammesse, Festum agnorum vel Festum ad vincula Sancti Petri," and Mr. Way's note derives the word from Anglo-Saxon hláf, *panis*, and mæsse, *missa*, *festum*. In the *Gent. Mag.* for 1799, part i., p. 33, we have the following:—

Lammas-day, in the Salisbury Manualis is called *benedictio novorum fructuum*; in the Red Book of Derby, hlāfmæsse-dæg; see also *Oros. Interp.* l. 6, c. 19. But in the Sax. Chron. p. 138, A.D. 1009, it is hlām-mæsse: again, p. 187, A.D. 1086, Lam-mæsse. Mass was a word for festival; hence our way of naming the festivals of Christmas, Candlemass, Martinmass, etc. Instead, therefore, of Lammas, *quasi* *Lamb* masse, from the offering of the tenants of York, may we not rather suppose the *f* to have been left out in the course of time from general use, and *la*-mass, or *hla*-mæsse, will appear.

In the note on "latter lammas," as synonymous with the "*ad Græcas kalendas*" of the Latins, it would hardly be deemed improper to introduce the celebrated extempore hexameter of Queen Elizabeth, from Lord Orford's Royal and Noble Authors, "*Ad Græcas bone rex, fiant mandata, kalendas.*"

In the *Paston Letters* we have "St. Margaret's Mass" as the date of a letter.

20 (page 66). In the *Antiquary*, vol. vi., pp. 41-45 (August, 1882), I have summarized the more important facts relating to Lammas and its customs. The following passage may perhaps be quoted to indicate the general drift of the conclusion arrived at:—

"Lammas Day is properly the 1st of August. The Act of George II. which established the new style in England excepted the days for the commencement of Lammas rights from the operation of the statute. Lammas Day, under this operation, is now the 13th of August. It is one of the four cross quarter-days, as they are now called. Whitsuntide was formerly the first of these quarters, Lammas the second, Martinmas the next, and Candlemas the last. Such partition of the year was once as common as the present divisions of Lady Day, Midsummer, Michaelmas, and Christmas. Some rents are still payable at those ancient quarterly days in England, and they were not long ago, even if they do not still continue, general in Scotland.* It is a day on which many quaint customs were enacted; but the one great custom which marks it as a link with a very remote past is the removal of the fences from many lands throughout the country, and the throwing open to common pasturage of lands which, till this day from the end of last Lammas-tide, had been used as private property. In fact, it is not too much to say that in this custom of Lammas-tide we have the key to the whole system of ancient agriculture. Wherever we find Lammas customs in England we may take

* Brady, *Clavis Calendaria*, ii., p. 107.

it for granted that it is the last remaining link of a whole group of customs which together make up the history of the primitive village community. It is curious to observe with what varying degrees of integrity customs have lived in various parts of the country. In some places, for instance, we may find only the bare mention of Lammas-tide, and the throwing down of fences and the consequent opening of the land to common. In other places, as I shall show, there is much more at the back of this single Lammas custom—there is sufficient to enable us to open the great book of comparative politics, and to take our studies to that ancient Aryan land, India, or even still farther back in the history of primitive society, the native savages of Africa."

21 (page 73). See Note 17.

22 (page 74). This communication was written from "Burbach," which I cannot identify unless it be Burbage in Leicester or Wilts, or Burbeach in Sussex. The letter, which is not printed entire in the text, begins "Being on a visit some time since at the mansion of an old friend in a midland county."

23 (page 80). See *Gentleman's Magazine Library, Manners and Customs*, p. 90.

24 (page 83). See *Folk-Lore Record*, vol. iii., part i., pp. 87-116, for a Christmas Play in Dorsetshire, by Mr. J. S. Udall, and *Folk-Lore Journal*, vol. ii., pp. 1-8, for a "Sussex Tipteerer's Play," by Mr. F. E. Sawyer, wherein similar characters and dialogue are introduced. Generally for these plays see Strutt's *Sports and Pastimes*, Brand's *Popular Antiquities*, Chamber's *Book of Days*, Hone's *Every Day Book*, *Notes and Queries*, 2nd series, xi. 271, 4th series, x. 487, 5th series, ii. 505, iv. 511, x. 484.

25 (p. 91). I cannot discover that Arthur Young's book is in the British Museum Library. The only entry under his name is that of *A Dissertation on Gospel Demoniacs*, London, 1760, 8vo. The full title of M. de Sainmore's book, from which the quotation is made, is as follows:—*Histoire de Russie représentée par figures, accompagnées d'un précis Historique; les figures gravées par F. A. David d'après des dessins de Mounet; le discours par Blin de Sainmore*. Paris, 1813, 4to. The first edition was brought out in 1797-1806, in 4to. For some important particulars about the festival of Kupalo and the derivation of the word, I would refer to Ralston's *Songs of the Russian People*, pp. 230, 247.

26 (page 107). The communication here referred to is given in 1826, part i., pp. 302-304, and is entitled, "On Demoniacism and Miracles," and does not appear to be worth reprinting in full; but I quote the following sections—the square brackets are in the original:

The method of expulsion is to an enlightened and sincere Christian perfectly disgusting. I will just superficially mention the miserable fictions concerning the various shapes and figures in which the devil entered and came out. It will here suffice briefly to notice, from St. Gregory, that several people had swallowed a devil, who had seated himself, without such a design (at least he is exculpated of such by Gregory), upon a salad, over which the sign of the Cross had not been made. Stories of the same kind also frequently appear from the "Clementina," and thereby betray the Romish stamp.

I shall present a few more cases. In a very high wind the unclean spirit "in specie vespertilionis," or in the shape of a bat, flew down the throat of a recreant deacon, for not giving credit to the miracles of St. Virgilius, and preventing the populace from paying their devotions to his reliques. While St. Appianus, a monk of Pavia, was in the act of relieving a possessed woman, who had found no assistance even at Rome (that his monastery might be brought into greater repute); she spat smoke and blood, and many saw with their own eyes that she vomited up the devil. The reliques of St. Hidulphus, Bishop of Triers, had greater efficacy than praying, crossing, etc.; the possessed in general were cured by them, "a quocunque

spiritu vexabantur ;" for many of the devils are of a very obstinate temper. In a particular chapel stood a vat with "aqua exorcizata," wherein it was the custom to dip the possessed till they were healed. Once, however, a peasant came hither, who was possessed by so powerful a dæmon, that he could scarcely be coerced by iron chains, and of such extensive knowledge, that he boasted of being able to speak all languages; he understood "artes liberales;" he knew everything that happened, even the ideas and thoughts of such as appeared before him. He was present at mass, perfectly undaunted, and even joined in singing the responses, anthems, and psalms; he was neither scared at the sign of the Cross, nor a substantial "crucifixus." He was even plunged into the above-mentioned vat, but without effect; he tormented the bystanders. The monk whose turn it was to occupy the confessional, confessed his penitents beforehand, because he knew that the devil divulged everything; [this at once established the importance of close auricular confession;] and now he came and thus addressed the devil: Thou arch liar and deceiver, thou pretendest to know all things; tell what thou knowest of me. Upon this, he was greatly embarrassed, looked down upon the ground, and bethought himself what he should allege (against a holy monk). ["In vita S. Hidulphi," n. 19.] At last he said: Ah, the day before yesterday, thou didst commit some act of great enormity; it has now slipped my memory. The monk hereupon began to read over his head the commencement of the gospel of John. [This was of as much potency in such cases, as the prayer of St. Christopher to the treasure-diggers.] Ey, said the devil, thou idiot, hold thy tongue; I understand the gospel and its mystery, better than thou; thou wilt never drive me out by that; go, look out for something better. Away, therefore, went the monk. He fetched out of the church the little shrine, which contained the holy reliques. No sooner did this approach him, than the devil roared out, Away with my enemy, away! But the monk put the casket [perhaps not very gently, seeing cold water was of no effect] upon his head. Then screamed the devil: Ah, miserable wretch that I am! Ah, I beseech thee, take it away! Encouraged by this, the monk now plied him with more vehement conjurations; so much the more bellowed the devil, Away with my enemies! Being asked, Who are thy enemies? [that the people might more firmly believe in the virtue of the said reliques] Ah, he replied, they are St. Laurentius and St. Stephanus; I must now perforce go out, through their merits. He then sprang from his mouth in the shape of a chafer, "scarabæus," fell upon the ground, and crawled slowly to the church-door, when he suddenly flew up in the air.

The author adds: I myself have seen in the shrines of reliques some of the stones that were thrown at Stephen to kill him; bloody coals from under the gridiron of St. Laurence; and the dalmatica of St. Leodigarius. Numbers of the possessed of both sexes, bound with ropes or chains, were brought by their friends to this vat; and upon dipping, were happily cured. From a variety of such stuff, a form and figure of the devil was gradually composed; so that without much difficulty a man could directly say, This is the devil.

Even in the Arabic gospels, printed at Rome, are a great many wooden cuts, representing the devil as like as he can stare, in the different forms of his exit. How great the mischief such erroneous and heathenish ideas have produced among Christians!

27 (page 119). The full title of this book, by Richard Flecknoe, is *Enigmatical Characters all taken to the Life from several persons' humours and dispositions*: London, 1658, 8vo. Mr. Hazlitt, in his *Collections and Notes*, first series, gives a list of Flecknoe's books and some particulars of them.

28 (page 125). I have discussed the subject in my *Primitive Folkmoos*, p. 55.

29 (page 133). This refers to a ghost-story, and will be included in a future volume containing the section "Dreams and Ghost-Stories."

30 (page 141). It will be useful on this subject to refer to Burn's *Justice of the Peace*, edited by Sir George Chetwynd, 1825, vol. i., p. 854. Jacob's *Law Dictionary*, *sub voce*, should also be consulted.

31 (page 152). This curious custom has revived in our own days. In the *Folk-Lore Journal* for January, 1883, vol. i, pp. 23-30, are the following curious notes:

The Divining Rod.—Mr. E. Vaughan Jenkins sent to the *Times* the following letter from a gentleman residing at Westbury-sub-Mendip, Wells, Somerset:—I have read your letter in the *Times* of Tuesday. You may possibly like to hear of my experience as to the divining-rod. In July, 1876, that very hot summer, the old well under my house became fouled and the water unfit to drink; so I decided on sinking another well about 100 yards off from my house, if I were advised that water could be found there. The field is perfectly dry, and there is no appearance of water anywhere near where I wished to sink. So I sent for a labouring man in the village who could "work the twig"—as the divining-rod is called here—and he came and cut a blackthorn "twig" out of my hedge, and proceeded round the field, and at one spot the "twig" was so violently affected that it flew out of his hands; he could not hold it. I may here observe that the village churchyard adjoins my field, and it was of consequence to me to know whether the spring went through or near the churchyard. So I asked the man to tell me which way the spring ran (of course under the ground); and he proceeded to follow up the spring, and found that it did not go near the churchyard. Having some doubts as to this man, about a month after I heard of another man living seven miles off, who, I had been told, could "work the twig." I sent for him, and he was quite unaware that the first man had tried for water; and to my astonishment, when he came near the spot indicated by the first man, he could not hold the twig, it was so much affected. I then asked him to tell me the course of the underground spring, and he went as near as possible to the first man—from about south-west to north-east. I thereupon decided to sink a well, the last man assuring me that water was not very far down. At 39 ft. the well-sinker came upon a spring of the most beautiful water, and there is in the well about 30 ft. of water in the summer, and in the winter it is nearly full. Now, there is nothing whatever to indicate water in my field or anywhere near it. The men who "worked the twig" will take nothing for their trouble.

The Divining-Rod in Gloucestershire.—Several of our contemporaries are making somewhat merry over Mr. Vaughan Jenkins' avowed belief in the powers and virtues of the "divining-rod." Some years back Mr. Jenkins bought two acres of hillside land in the neighbourhood of Cheltenham on which to build a house. To live in the house it was necessary to sink a well. The well-sinkers went to work, sank themselves to a depth of 51 ft., and then declared that "from the nature of the strata, etc., it would be perfectly useless to proceed farther." At a consultation of experts it was decided that, owing to the dip of the land and for various other reasons, "there was not the least possible chance of water being obtained on the plot of land anywhere." The foreman of the masons, however, suggested that the divining-rod should be tried, and further stated that he had a boy well qualified to carry out the trial. This child was said to have the gift in a remarkable degree; and the father declared that "if water was to be obtained on the plot, he would pledge his character that the boy would find it." The trial was made. The boy was sent for, and this is what happened: "He immediately repaired to a neighbouring hedge, and returned with a rod of blackthorn or hazel—I think the former—about 2 ft. 3 in. in length, and of the thickness of telegraph wire. Then, placing the ends of the rod between the thumb and forefinger of each hand, bending it slightly, and holding it before him at a short distance from the ground, he started on his expedition; I and others following him, and watching every movement closely. After going up and down, crossing and re-crossing the ground several times, but never on the same lines, the lad stopped, and to our great surprise we saw the rod exhibit signs of motion, the fingers and thumbs being perfectly motionless. The motion or trembling of the rod increasing, it slowly began to revolve, then at an accelerated pace, fairly twisting itself to such an extent that the lad, although he tried his best to retain it, was obliged to let it go, and it fled to some distance." These phenomena were so striking that, "coupled with the respectability of the parents, members of a religious body," they persuaded Mr. Jenkins to

call his well-sinkers together again to dig on the spot indicated; and on reaching the depth of 48 ft., they had the gratification of striking a strong spring of pure and beautiful water, coming in so fast as to cause them to make a hurried exit, and in a few hours the well contained a depth of 10 ft. of water, rising since occasionally to 15 ft., and so it now continues. Such is the story Mr. Jenkins tells, and which is now exciting very considerable comment.—*Midland Counties Herald*, Oct. 12, 1882.

32 (page 164). This book is a folio, and is in the British Museum. It is translated from H. Braunschweig *Thesaurus Pauperum*, an edition of which was published at Franckfurt in 1537, 4to. Hollybush has done several other works.

33 (page 170). The subject of the King's Evil is one of some importance, and has yet to be dealt with exhaustively. Mr. Hazlitt, in his *Handbook to Popular Literature*, p. 567, gives some valuable information. See also "Privy Purse Expenses of Henry VII., 1491-1505," in *Excerpta Historica*, 1833; *Willis's Current Notes*, March, 1857, p. 18; Forsyth's *Antiquary's Portfolio*, vol. ii., pp. 177-182; Nichol's *Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century*, vol. ii., pp. 495-505; Hazlitt's *Collection and Notes*, first series, p. 80.

34 (page 181). The following is another instance of this "word-charm" in *Gent. Mag.*, 1769, p. 377:

Litchfield, July 21, 1769.

Among some papers in the cabinet of a gentleman in the neighbourhood of this city some years ago was found the enclosed writing, which for its singularity I wish to see inserted in your valuable magazine, in hopes that some of your ingenious correspondents may be induced thereby to favour the public with their sentiments upon it, amongst whom I know of none more capable than my learned friend, Mr. T. Row, if subjects of greater importance do not engross his present attention.

It is written on vellum, and by the colour of the ink and shape of the letters, appears to be ancient. A silver plate is suspended by a ribbon; an exact copy of the legend engraved upon which I herewith send you; your affording it a place in your next publication will greatly oblige many of your constant readers, particularly

RICHARD GREENE.

THE LEGEND.

"Amaymon the Great, King of the South; and principal governour of the meridian angle; together with our conncellours, Aleche Berith and Mala; unto our terrestrial substitutes, Camret, Gygell, and Umbra, by our messenger, Emlon. Know that we have stood up before Him that sitteth on the Holy Throne, etc., who hath delivered unto us a confined power in the Ark of Justice. Haste, therefore, and flee to the prey of our confines, and securely keep the same in the bands of obscurity, by your invisible subtletyes, from the prying, and piercing eyes of incensed mortalls, untill the end and term of seven ages (being the result of time). In testimony of which guilty person we have signed these presents with our own characters, to which we always stick close.

Zay, Alzym, Muray Syron, Walgava, Rythin, Layaganum, Layarazin, Laysa.

35 (page 185). See Thorpe's *Ancient Laws and Institutes of England* (Record Commission), p. 396, "Canons enacted under King Edgar: 16. And we enjoin that every priest jealously promote Christianity, and totally extinguish every heathenism; and forbid well-worshippings and enchantments, and man-worshippings, and the vain practices which are carried on with various spells, and with 'frith-splots,' and with elders, and also with various other trees, and with stones, and with many various delusions, with which men do much of what they should not."

36 (page 193). I cannot discover that the writer ever carried out his idea. "The Drinking Match" was published in 1728 at Edinburgh, and is generally ascribed to Philip, Duke of Wharton.

37 (page 198). See the *Gent. Mag.* for 1784, p. 258, where this is described.

38 (page 214). This curious idea about the Tarantula has been frequently debated in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, and the communications thereupon will be printed in the volume which includes "Customs and Superstitions of Foreign Countries."

39 (page 216). This refers to a natural history article, published in 1796, pp. 3, 4. It contains the following passage: "The Staffordshire peasantry universally believe that the cuckoo subsists by sucking the eggs of other birds. Does this notion prevail in other parts of the kingdom?" It is to this query that the answer in the text refers.

40 (page 229). Consult Ortolan's *Roman Law*, "Fragments of the Twelve Tables," pp. 102-123, and Wordsworth's *Fragments and Specimens of Early Latin*, pp. 254, et seq.

41 (page 230). See Thorpe's *Ancient Laws and Institutes of England* (Record Commission), p. 86: "Æthelstan's Domes: 6. And we have ordained respecting witchcrafts and 'lyblacs' and 'morth dæds'; if anyone should be thereby killed, and he could not deny it, that he be liable in his life. But if he will deny it, and at the threefold ordeal shall be guilty; that he be cxx days in prison; and after that let his kindred take him out, and give to the king cxx shillings, and pay the 'wer' to his kindred, enter into 'borh' for him, that he evermore desist from the like." Thorpe says of the word "lyblacs" that "whatever may have been the precise import of this term in its usual acceptation, whether 'fascinatio' or 'incantatio,' as given in this book, it is clearly derived from the same root as the old German 'luppi,' venenum; 'luppig,' venenatus; 'luppari,' veneficus; 'lubper,' maleficus—hence lybbe, lyb, lyb-lác." See also "Cnut's Domes: 4. And we command that ye undertake diligently to cleanse the country on every side and everywhere to desist from evil deeds, and if witches or diviners, 'morth-workers' or adulteresses be anywhere found in the land, let them be diligently driven out of this country; or let them totally perish in the country except they desist, and the more thoroughly amend." "5. And we earnestly forbid every heathenism; heathenism is that men worship idols; that is, that they worship heathen gods and the sun or the moon, fire or rivers, water-wells or stones, or forest-trees of any kind; or love witchcraft, or promote 'morth-work' in any wise; or by 'blot,' or by 'fyrht'; or perform anything pertaining to such illusions."

42 (page 250). It is rather curious to compare this observation with the records contained in the publications of the Folk-Lore Society. So recently as August, 1884, the *Folk-Lore Journal* (p. 219), records the following instance:

Witchcraft in Scotland.—In illustration of the gross ignorance and superstitious beliefs of the smuggling fraternity, it may be stated that, on account of his success in unearthing smugglers, the official who discovered the worm which had been so ingeniously secreted, had made himself so obnoxious to that class that a few years ago an attempt was actually made to remove him by means of the occult and mysterious agency of witchcraft. The means adopted in order to compass the death of this obnoxious official was the well-known *corp creadh*, or clay image, the efficacy of which, when properly gone about, to destroy life, is still implicitly believed in by the bulk of the population in the more rustic parts of the Highlands. The *modus operandi* consists in the operator modelling an image in clay of the person whose death is desired, and having muttered the appropriate incantation over it, placing it in water running towards the east, the idea being that the body of the victim wastes away in exact proportion as the water wears away the clay of the image. When a sudden death is desired, the image is placed in a rapidly running stream. If, on the other hand, a long, lingering, and painful illness should be desired, a number of pins and rusty nails are stuck in the chest and other vital parts of the image, which is then deposited in comparatively still waters. Should, however, the *corp creadh* happen to be discovered in the water before the thread of

life is severed, it at once loses its efficacy; and not only does the victim recover, but, so long as the image is kept intact, he is ever after proof against the professors of the black art. That the attempt had miscarried in the case of the officer in question is attributed by the believers in witchcraft to the fact that a pearl-fisher, in the course of his legitimate calling, happened to discover the image before it had been many days in the water.—*Glasgow Herald*, May 12, 1884.

43 (page 262). This plate is of an ivory carving, the figures not being highly raised. "The portraits," says the writer [R. H.], "appear to be those of four great characters in necromancy, of which the lower three are probably intended for Mother Shipton, Friar Bacon, and Dr. Faustus, but with the upper one I am unacquainted. It was bought at a sale in the neighbourhood of Warminster, in Wiltshire, a few years since." The plate and this description is given in the volume for 1831, part ii., p. 401.

44 (page 263). Nothing further was communicated on this subject after the date of this letter.

45 (page 269). The trial is reported in the same volume, 1751, p. 375, and the execution of one of the ringleaders on p. 378. These accounts are as follow:—

July 30.—At Hertford assizes was condemned Thos. Colley for the murder of Ruth Osborne near Tring. The facts proved at this trial were as related pp. 186, 198, with the addition of the following particulars. Such was the folly and superstition of the crowd, that when they searched the workhouse for the supposed witch, they looked even into the salt-box, supposing she might have concealed herself within less space than would contain a cat. Having wrapped the deceased and her husband in two different sheets, first tying their great toes and thumbs together, the most active of the mob dragged the deceased into the water by a cord which they had put round her body, and she not sinking, the prisoner Colley went into the pond and turned her over several times with a stick; after a considerable time she was haw'd to shore, and the old man was dragged into the pond in the same manner; and this they repeated to each three times. The deceased, after she was dragg'd in the third time, being pushed about by the prisoner, slipt out of the sheet, and her body was exposed naked; notwithstanding which the prisoner continued to push her on the breast with his stick, which she with her left hand endcavoured to catch hold of, but was prevented by his snatching it away. After using her in this manner till she was motionless, they dragg'd her to shore, and laid her on the ground, where she expired; and then the prisoner went among the spectators and collected money for the pains he had taken in showing them sport. The old man afterwards recovered, but did not appear as an evidence.

Saturday, Aug. 24.—Thomas Colley, for the murder of Ruth Osborne (see p. 375), was executed at Gubblecut Cross, and afterwards hang'd in chains on the same gallows near thirty miles from the place of his confinement, the people about Marston-Meere having petitioned against hanging him near their houses. The day before his execution he received the sacrament, and signed a solemn declaration of his faith relating to witchcraft, which was read at his request by the minister of Tring, who attended him, just before he was turn'd off. He was escorted from Hertford gaol by the sheriff and his officers, and a guard of 108 men, 7 officers, and 2 trumpets, belonging to the regiment of horse blue. The procession was slow, solemn, and moving. Friday night he was lodged at St. Alban's gaol, and at five the next morning was put into a one-horse chaise with the executioner, and came to the place of execution about eleven. The infatuation of the greatest part of the country people was so great, that they would not be spectators of his death (perhaps from a consciousness of being present at the murder as well as he); yet many thousands stood at a distance to see him go, grumbling and muttering that it was a hard case

to hang a man for destroying an old wicked woman that had done so much mischief by her witchcraft. As he passed thro' Tring, just as the prisoner's wife and daughter were permitted to speak to him, a pistol went off by the carelessness of one of the troopers, which put the whole corps in some consternation, taking it at first to be fired from a window; but no other accident happened. He behaved very penitent.

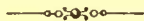
46 (page 280). The Witches' Cauldron at Frensham is illustrated in *Willis's Current Notes* for October, 1851, p. 74, and quotations are given from Aubrey's *Surrey*, iv., pp. 366, 367, and Grose's *Antiquities of England*, vol. v., p. 112.

47 (page 305). The reprint of this tract by the Roxburgh Club differs in spelling from that given here, but the differences are slight. The title is *Newes from Scotland, declaring the damnable life of Doctor Fian.....Published according to the Scottish copie. Printed for William Wright.* It will be seen that the printer's name is different from that given *ante*, p. 295. The Roxburgh Club reprint contains facsimiles of two curious woodcuts.





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